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# **Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson**

**- poems -**

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## **Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (8 December 1832 – 26 April 1910)**

Bjørnstjerne Martinius Bjørnson was a Norwegian writer and the 1903 Nobel Prize in Literature laureate. Bjørnson is considered as one of The Four Greats (De Fire Store) Norwegian writers; the others being Henrik Ibsen, Jonas Lie, and Alexander Kielland. Bjørnson is celebrated for his lyrics to the Norwegian National Anthem, "Ja, vi elsker dette landet".

### Childhood and education

Bjørnson was born at the farmstead of Bjørgan in Kvikne, a secluded village in the Østerdalen district, some sixty miles south of Trondheim. In 1837 Bjørnson's father, who was the pastor of Kvikne, was transferred to the parish of Nettet, outside Molde in Romsdal. It was in this scenic district that Bjørnson spent his childhood.

After a few years studying in the neighboring city Molde, Bjørnson was sent at the age of 17 to Heltberg Latin School (Heltbergs Studentfabrikk) in Christiania to prepare for university. This was the same school that trained Ibsen, Lie, and Vinje.

Bjørnson had realized that he wanted to pursue his talent for poetry (he had written verses since age eleven). He matriculated at the University of Oslo in 1852, soon embarking upon a career as a journalist, focusing on criticism of drama.

### Early production

In 1857 Bjørnson published *Synnøve Solbakken*, the first of his peasant novels. In 1858 this was followed by *Arne*, in 1860 by *En glad Gut* (A Happy Boy), and in 1868 by *Fiskerjentene* (The Fisher Girls). These are the most important specimens of his *bonde-fortællinger* or peasant tales.

Bjørnson was anxious "to create a new saga in the light of the peasant," as he put it, and he thought this should be done, not merely in prose fiction, but in national dramas or *folke-stykker*. The earliest of these was a one-act piece set in the 12th century, *Mellem Slagene* (Between the Battles), written in 1855 and produced in 1857. He was especially influenced at this time by the study of Jens Immanuel Baggesen and Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger, during a visit to Copenhagen. *Mellem Slagene* was followed by *Halte-Hulda* (Lame Hulda) in 1858, and *Kong Sverre* (King Sverre) in 1861. His most important work to date was the poetic trilogy of Sigurd Slembe (Sigurd the Bad), which Bjørnson published in 1862.

### The mature author

At the close of 1857 Bjørnson had been appointed director of the theater at Bergen, a post which he held for two years, when he returned to Christiania. From 1860 to 1863 he travelled widely throughout Europe. Early in 1865 he undertook the management of the Christiania theatre, and brought out his popular comedy of *De Nygifte* (The Newly Married) and his romantic tragedy of *Mary Stuart in Scotland*. In 1870 he published *Poems and Songs* and the epic cycle *Arnljot Gelline*; the latter volume contains the ode *Bergliot*, one of Bjørnson's finest contributions to lyrical poetry.

Between 1864 and 1874, Bjørnson displayed a slackening of the intellectual forces very remarkable in a man of his energy; he was mainly occupied with politics and with his business as a theatrical manager. This was the period of Bjørnson's most fiery propaganda as a radical agitator. In 1871 he began to supplement his journalistic work by delivering lectures throughout Scandinavia.

From 1874 to 1876 Bjørnson was absent from Norway, and in the peace of voluntary exile he recovered his imaginative powers. His new departure as a dramatic author began with *En fallit* (A Bankruptcy) and *Redaktøren* (The Editor) in 1874, social dramas of an extremely modern and realistic cast.

The "national poet"

Bjørnson settled on his estate of Aulestad in Gausdal. In 1877 he published another novel, *Magnhild*, in which his ideas on social questions were seen to be in a state of fermentation, and gave expression to his republican sentiments in the polemical play *Kongen* (The King). In a later edition of the play, he prefixed an essay on "Intellectual Freedom" in further explanation of his position. *Kaptein Mansana* (Captain Mansana), an episode of the war of Italian independence, was written in to 1878.

Extremely anxious to obtain full success on the stage, Bjørnson concentrated his powers on a drama of social life, *Leonarda* (1879), which raised a violent controversy. A satirical play, *Det nye System* (The New System), was produced a few weeks later. Although these plays of Bjørnson's second period were greatly discussed, few were financially successful.

Bjørnson produced a social drama, *En Handske* (A Gauntlet), in 1883, but was unable to persuade any manager to stage it except in a modified form. In the autumn of the same year, Bjørnson published a mystical or symbolic drama *Over Ævne* (Beyond Powers), dealing with the abnormal features of religious excitement with extraordinary force; this was not acted until 1899, when it achieved a great success.

Political interests

From his youth and forwards, Bjørnson admired Henrik Wergeland, and became a vivid spokesman for the Norwegian Left-wing movement. In this respect, he supported Ivar Aasen, and joined forces in the political struggles in the 1860s and -70s. When the great monument over Henrik Wergeland were to be erected in 1881, it came to political struggle between left and right, and the left-wing got the upper hand. Bjørnson presented the speech on behalf of Wergeland, and also honouring the constitution and the farmers.

Bjørnson's political opinions had brought upon him a charge of high treason, and he took refuge for a time in Germany, returning to Norway in 1882. Convinced that the theater was practically closed to him, he turned back to the novel, and published in 1884 *Det flager i Byen og paa Havnen* (Flags are Flying in Town and Port), embodying his theories on heredity and education. In 1889 he printed another long and still more remarkable novel, *Paa Guds veje* (On God's Path), which is chiefly concerned with the same problems. The same year saw the publication of a comedy, *Geografi og Kærlighed* (Geography and Love), which met with success.

A number of short stories, of a more or less didactic character, dealing with startling points of emotional experience, were collected and published 1894.

Later plays were a political tragedy called Paul Lange og Tora Parsberg (1898), a second part of Over Ævne (Beyond Powers II) (1895), Laboremus (1901), På Storhove (At Storhove) (1902), and Daglannet (Dag's Farm) (1904). In 1899, at the opening of the National Theatre, Bjørnson received an ovation, and his saga-drama of King Sigurd the Crusader was performed at the opening of Nationaltheatret in Oslo.

A subject which interested him greatly was the question of the bondemaal, the adopting of a national language for Norway distinct from the dansk-norsk (Dano-Norwegian), in which most Norwegian literature had hitherto been written. At an early stage, before 1860, Bjørnson had himself experimented with at least one short story written in landsmål. The interest, however, did not last, and he soon abandoned this enterprise altogether. Afterwards, he regretted that he never felt he gained the mastery of this language. Bjørnson's strong and sometimes rather narrow patriotism did not blind him to what he considered the fatal folly of such a proposal, and his lectures and pamphlets against the målstræv in its extreme form were very effective. His attitude towards this must have changed sometime after 1881, as he still spoke on behalf of the farmers at this point.

Although he seems to have been supportive of Ivar Aasen and friendly towards farmers (in the peasant-novels), he later denounced this, and stated in 1899 that there was limits to a farmer's cultivation. I can draw a line on the wall. The farmer can cultivate himself to this level, and no more, he wrote in 1899. Rumour has it that he had been insulted by a farmer at some point, and uttered the statement in sheer anger. In 1881, he spoke of the farmer's clothing borne by Henrik Wergeland, and his opinion then states that this garment, worn by Wergeland, was "of the most influential things" in the initiation of the national day. Bjørnson's attitude towards the farmers remain ambiguous. One has to remember that his father himself was a farmer's son.

During the last twenty years of his life he wrote hundreds of articles in major European papers. He attacked the French justice in the Dreyfus Affair, and he fought for the rights of children in Slovakia to learn their own mother tongue. "To detach children from their mother tongue is identical to tearing them away from their mothers breasts," he wrote. Bjørnson wrote in multiple newspapers about Cernová massacre under the title 'The greatest industry of Hungary - which was supposedly 'to produce Magyars'.

#### Last Years

Bjørnson was one of the original members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, that awards the Nobel Peace Prize, where he sat from 1901 to 1906. In 1903 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Bjørnson had done as much as any other man to rouse Norwegian nationalistic feeling, but in 1903, on the verge of the rupture between Norway and Sweden, he preached conciliation and moderation to the Norwegians. However in 1905 when Norway was attempting to dissolve the forced union with Sweden, Bjørnson sent a telegram to the Norwegian Prime minister stating, "Now is the time to maintain a united front." The minister replied, "Now is the time to keep our mouths shut."

He died on 26 April 1910 in Paris, where for some years he had spent his winters, and was buried at home with every mark of honor. The Norwegian coastal defence ship HNoMS Norge was sent to convey his remains back to his own land.

Eserleri:

Mellem Slagene, (Between the Battles) saga drama, 1857

Synnøve Solbakken, peasant story, 1857

Arne, 1859

En glad Gut, (A Happy Boy) 1860  
Halte-Hulda, (Lame Hulda) 1858  
Kong Sverre, (King Sverre) 1861  
Sigurd Slembe, (Sigurd the Bad) 1862  
Maria Stuart i Skotland, (Mary Stuart in Scotland) 1863  
De Nygifte, (The Newly Married) 1865  
Fiskerjenten, 1868  
Arnljot Gelline, epic cycle 1870  
Digte og Sange, (Poems and Songs) 1880  
Brudeslåtten, peasant story, 1872  
Sigurd Jorsalafar, saga drama, 1872  
En fallit, (The Bankrupt) drama, 1875  
Redaktøren, (The Editor) drama, 1875  
Kaptejn Mansana, (Captain Mansana) novel, 1875  
Kongen, (The King) 1877  
Magnhild, 1877  
Det ny system, (The New System) 1879  
Leonarda, 1879  
En hanske (A Gauntlet), 1883  
Støv, 1882  
Over ævne, første stykke, (Beyond Human Power - I) 1883  
Det flager i byen og på havnen, (translated as "The Heritage of the Kurts")  
1884  
På guds veje, (In God's Way) 1889  
Fred, oratorium, 1891  
Over oevne, annet stykke, (Beyond Human Power - II) 1895  
Paul Lange og Tora Parsberg, 1898  
Daglannet, 1904  
Når den ny vin blomstrer, (When the New Wine Blooms) 1909  
Norges Vel, kantat, 1909

## A Day Of Sunshine

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I roved to the woods, on my back I lay,  
In cradle of fancy rolled me;  
But there were ants, and gnats that bite,  
The horse-fly was keen, the wasp showed fight.

"Dear me, don't you want to be out in this fine  
weather?" --said mother, who sat on the steps and sang.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
A meadow I found, on my back I lay,  
And sang what my spirit told me;  
Then snakes came crawling, a fathom long,  
To bask in the sun,--I fled with my song.

"In such blessed weather we can go barefoot,"--said mother,  
as she pulled off her stockings.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I loosened a boat, on my back I lay,  
While blithely the current bowled me;  
But hot grew the sun, and peeled my nose;  
Enough was enough, and to land I chose.

"Now these are just the days to make hay in,"-- said mother,  
as she stuck the rake in it.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I climbed up a tree, oh, what bliss to play,  
As cooling the breeze consoled me;  
But worms soon fell on my neck, by chance,  
And jumping, I cried: "'T is the Devil's own dance!"

"Yes, if the cows aren't sleek and shiny to-day, they'll  
never be so,"--said mother, gazing up the hillside.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I dashed to the waterfall's endless play,  
There only could peace enfold me.  
The shining sun saw me drown and die,--  
If you made this ditty, 't was surely not I.

"Three more such sunshine-days, and everything will  
be in,"--said mother, and went to make my bed.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## A Meeting

... O'er uplands fresh swift sped my sleigh...  
A light snow fell; along the way  
Stood firs and birches slender.  
The former pondered deep, alone,  
The latter laughed, their white boughs shone;-  
All brings a picture tender.

So light and free is now the air;  
Of all its burdens stripped it bare  
The snow with playful sally.  
I glimpse behind its veil so thin  
A landscape gay, and high within  
A snow-peak o'er the valley.

But from the border white and brown,  
Where'er I look, there's peeping down  
A face... but whose, whose is it?  
I bore my gaze 'neath cap and brim  
And see the snowflakes swarm and swim;-  
Will some one here me visit?

A star fell on my glove... right here...  
And here again... its unlike peer;...  
They will with riddles pose me.  
And smiles that in the air abound  
From eyes so good... I look around...  
'T is memory besnows me.

The stars spin fine their filigree,  
Can hidden spirits in it be?  
There haunts me something awing...  
You finer birch, you snow unstained,  
You purer air,-a soul you've gained?  
Who is it here now drawing

His features dear in nature's face,  
In all this fascinating grace,  
In falling stars that cheat me,-  
In these white gleams that finely glance,  
In all this silent rhythmic dance?...  
Hans Brecke!-comes to meet me.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## A Sigh

Evening sunshine never  
Solace to my window bears,  
Morning sunshine elsewhere fares;-  
Here are shadows ever.

Sunshine freely falling,  
Wilt thou not my chamber find?  
Here some rays would reach a mind,  
'Mid the dark appalling.

Morning sunshine's gladness,  
Oh, thou art my childhood bright;  
While  
thou  
playest pure and white,

I  
would weep in sadness.

Evening sunshine's whiling,  
Oh, thou art the wise man's rest;-  
Farther on! Then from the west  
Greet my window smiling!

Morning sunshine's singing,  
Oh, thou art the fantasy  
That the sun-glad world lifts free,  
Past my powers' winging.

Evening sunshine's quiet,  
Thou art more than wisdom's rest,  
Christian faith glows in thee blest:  
Calm my soul's wild riot!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Alone And Repentant**

A friend I possess, whose whispers just said,  
"God's peace!" to my night-watching mind.  
When daylight is gone and darkness brings dread,  
He ever the way can find.

He utters no word to smite and to score;  
He, too, has known sin and its grief.  
He heals with his look the place that is sore,  
And stays till I have relief.

He takes for his own the deed that is such  
That sorrows of heart increase.  
He cleanses the wound with so gentle a touch,  
The pain must give way to peace.

He followed each hope the heights that would scale  
Reproached not a hapless descent.  
He stands here just now, so mild, but so pale; --  
In time he shall know what it meant.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Answer From Norway To The Speeches In The Swedish House Of Nobles, 1860**

Have you heard what says the Swede now,  
Young Norwegian man?  
Have you seen what forms proceed now,  
Border-watch to plan?  
Shades of those from life departed,  
Our forefathers single-hearted,  
Who, when words like these were said,  
Mounted guard and knew no dread.

Says the Swede now: That our cherished  
Norseland's banner red,  
That which flew when Magnus perished,  
As to-day outspread,  
Which o'er Fredrikshald victorious  
And o'er Adler waved all glorious,  
That the Swedish yellow-blue  
Must in shame henceforth eschew.

Says the Swede now: Lost their luster  
Have our memories,  
Brighter honors shall we muster,  
If we borrow his.  
Bids us forth to Lützen stumble,  
Close this straw-thatched cottage humble,  
Drag our grandsire's ancient seat  
To the Swedes for honor meet.

Let it stand, that poor old lumber,  
To us dear for aye;  
Sweden's ground it could but cumber,  
And it might not pay.  
For, we know from history's pages,  
Some sat there in former ages,  
Sverre Priest and other men,  
Who may wish to come again.

Says the Swede now: We must know it,

He  
our freedom gave,  
But the Swedish sword can mow it,  
Send it to its grave.  
Yet the case is not alarming,  
He must fare with good fore-arming,  
For in truth some fell of yore,  
There where he would break a door.

Says the Swede now: We a clever  
Little boy remain,  
Very suitable to ever  
Hold his mantle's train.  
But would Christie be so pliant,

With his comrades self-reliant,  
If they still at Eidsvold stood,  
Sword-girt, building Norway's good?

Big words oft the Swede was saying,  
Only small were we,  
But they never much were weighing,  
When the test should be.  
On the little cutter sailing,  
Wessel and Norse youth prevailing,  
Sweden's flag and frigate chased  
From the Kattegat in haste.

Sweden's noblemen are shaking  
Charles the Twelfth's proud hat;  
We, in council or war-making,  
Peers are for all that.  
If things take the worse turn in there,  
Aid from Torgny we shall win there.  
Then o'er all the Northland's skies  
Greater freedom's sun shall rise.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Anton Martin Schweigaard (In The Church After The Funeral Oration)**

Give us, God, to Thee now turning,  
Fullness of joy, tears full and burning,  
Of will the full refining fire!  
Hear our prayer o'er his inurning:  
His will was  
one  
, the whole discerning,  
His whole soul would to it aspire.  
Yes; give us yet again,  
With power to lead, great men,-  
Power in counsel our folk to lead,  
Our folk in deed,  
Our folk in gladness and in need!

Thou, O God, our want preventest;  
To raise the temple  
him  
Thou lentest,  
A spirit bright and pure and great.  
When Thou from time to call him meantest,  
Her tender soul to him Thou sentest  
Who went before to heaven's gate.  
When Thou didst set him free,  
An epoch ceased to be.  
Men then marveled, the while they said:  
'Living and dead,  
O'er all our land he beauty spread.'

Help us, God, to wiser waring,  
When to our land Thou light art bearing,  
That we Thy dayspring then may know.  
God, our future Thou'rt preparing,  
Oh, give us longing, honor's daring,  
That we the great may not forego!  
Thou sentest many out,-  
Cease not, our God, nor doubt!  
Let us follow Thy way, Thy call,  
Men, words, and all!  
Thy mercies shall our North enwall!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## At A Banquet For Professor Ludv. Kr. Daa

Youthful friends here a circle form,  
Elder foes now surrender.  
Feel among us in safety, warm,  
Toward you our hearts are tender.  
Once again on a hard-fought day  
Hero-like you have led the way,  
Smiting all that before you stood;-  
But now be good!

With no hubbub, without champagne,  
Dress-suit, and party-collar,  
We would honor o'er viands plain  
Grateful our 'grand old scholar'!  
When all quiet are wind and wave,  
Seldom we see this pilot brave;-  
When storm-surges our ship might whelm,  
He takes the helm!

-Takes the helm and through thick and thin  
(Clear are his old eyes burning),  
Steers the course with his trusty 'grin,'  
Straight, where the others are turning!  
Thanks gave to him I know not who,  
For he scolded the skipper, too!-  
Back he went to his home right soon:  
We had the boon.

He has felt what it is to go  
Hated, till truth gains the battle;  
He has felt what it is to know  
Blows that from both sides rattle.  
He has felt what the cost is, so  
Forward the present its path to show:  
He, whose strength had such heights attained,  
Stood all disdained.

Would that Norway soon grew so great  
That it with justice rewarded  
Heroes who its true weal create,  
Who are no laggards sordid.  
Shall we always so slowly crawl,  
Split forever in factions small,  
Idly counting each ill that ails?-  
No! Set the sails!

Set the sails for the larger life,  
Whereto our nation has power!  
Daily life is with death but rife,  
If there's not growth every hour.  
Rally to war for the cause of right,  
Sing 'neath the standard of honor bright,  
Sail with faith in our God secure,

And strong endure

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

### **At A Banquet Given To The Deputation Of The Swedish Riksdag To The Coronation, In Trondhjem, July 17**

You chosen men we welcome here  
From brothers near.  
We welcome you to Olaf's town  
That Norway's greatest mem'ries crown,  
Where ancient prowess looking down  
With searching gaze,  
The question puts to sea and strand:  
Are men now in the Northern land  
Like yesterday's?

'T is well, if on the battlefield  
Our 'Yes' is sealed!  
'T is well, if now our strength is steeled  
To grasp our fathers' sword and shield  
And in life's warfare lift and wield  
For God and home!  
For us they fought; 't is now our call  
To raise for them a temple-hall,  
Fair freedom's dome.

List to the Northern spirit o'er  
Our sea and shore!  
Here once high thoughts in word were freed,  
In homely song, in homely deed;  
And ever shall the selfsame need  
That spirit sing:  
Heed not things trivial, foreign, new;  
Alone th' eternal, Northern, true  
Can harvest bring.

O brother-band, this faith so dear  
Has brought us here?  
The spirit of the North to free,  
Our common toil and prayer shall be,  
Those greater days again to see,-  
As once before,  
Of home and trust a message strong  
To send the warring world we long  
Forevermore.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **At Hansteen's Bier**

God, we thank Thee for the dower  
Thou gavest Norway in his power,  
Whom in the grave we now shall lay!  
Starlit paths of thoughts that awe us  
His spirit found; his deeds now draw us  
To deeds, as mighty magnets play.  
He was the first to stand  
A light in our free land;  
Of our present the first fair crown,  
The first renown,  
At Norway's feet he laid it down.

We his shining honors sharing,  
And humble now his body bearing,  
Shall sing with all the world our praise.  
God, who ever guides our nation,  
Hath called us to a high vocation  
And shown where He our goal doth raise.  
People of Norway, glad  
Go on, as God us bade!  
God has roused you; He knows whereto,  
Though we are few.  
With Him our future we shall view.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## At Michael Sars's Grave

Ever he would roam  
Toward th' eternal home;  
From the least life deep in ocean  
To each gleam of stars in motion,  
Worth of all he weighed.  
Now the Lord lends aid.

Still he passed beyond,  
Softly dreaming; fond  
Nature met him as her lover.  
God with strength his soul shall cover  
'Mid the starry throng  
Through the spheres' pure song.

Even here on earth  
Harmony's sweet birth-  
When discovery new truth sunders,  
When the small reveals its wonders-  
Filled his soul with song  
For the ages long.

Where his watch he kept,  
Eyes a hundred swept.  
Where millenniums sand assembled,  
Where the tiniest life-pulse trembled,  
There he sought the clue,  
Silent, wise, and true.

In a water glass  
Searching he saw pass  
All the ocean's life; his thinking  
To unfathomed deeps was sinking;  
Where lay riddles locked,  
There he came and knocked.

Fair our fatherland,  
While such faith shall stand!  
With an eye so true and tender,  
With a sense so fine for splendor  
In the small and still,-  
Great ends we fulfil!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Ballad Of Tailor Nils**

If you were born before yesterday,  
Surely you've heard about Tailor Nils, who flaunts him so gay.

If it's more than a week that you've been here,  
Surely you've heard how Knut Storedragen got a lesson severe.

Up on the barn of Ola-Per Kviste after a punchin':  
"When Nils heaves you again, take with you some luncheon."

Hans Bugge, he was a man so renowned,  
Haunting ghosts of his name spread alarm all around.

"Tailor Nils, where you wish to lie, now declare!  
On that spot will I spit and lay your head right there."--

"Oh, just come up so near, that I know you by the scent!  
Think not that by your jaw to earth I shall be bent!"

When first they met, 't was scarce a bout at all,  
Neither man was ready yet to try to get a fall.

The second time Hans Bugge slipped his hold.  
"Are you tired now, Hans Bugge? The dance will soon be bold."

The third time Hans fell headlong, and forth the blood did spurt.  
"Why spit you now so much, man?" -- "Oh my, that fall did hurt!"--

Saw you a tree casting shadows on new-fallen snow?  
Saw you Nils on a maiden smiling glances bestow?

Have you seen Tailor Nils when the dance he commences?  
Are you a maiden, then go!--It's too late, when you've lost your senses.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Bergen

As thou sittest there  
Skerry-bound and fair,  
Mountains high around and ocean's deep before thee,  
On thee casts her spell

Saga  
, that shall tell  
Once again the wonders of our land.

Honor is thy due,  
'Bergen never new,'  
Ancient and unaging as thy Holberg's humor;  
Once kings sought thine aid,-  
Mighty now in trade,-  
First to fly the flag of liberty.

Oft in proud array,  
As a sunshine-day  
Breaks forth from thy rain and fog wind-driven,  
Thou didst come with men  
Or great deeds again,  
When the clouds were darkest o'er our land.

Thy soul was the ground,  
Wit-enriched and sound,  
Whence there sprang stout thoughts to make our country's harvest,  
Whence our arts exist,  
In their birth-hour kissed  
By thy nature, somber, large, and strong.

In thy mountain-hall  
Learned our painter,  
Dahl  
;  
Wand'ring on thy strands our poet dreamed,  
Welhaven  
;  
All thy morning's gold

Ole Bull  
ensouled,  
Greeted on thy bay by all the world.

With thy sea-wide sway  
Thou hast might for aye,  
Fjords of blue convey thy life-blood through our country.  
Norway's spirit thou  
Dost with joy endow,-  
Great thy past, no less thy future great.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Bergliot**

(In her lodgings)

To-day King Harald  
Must hold his ting-peace;  
For Einar has here  
Five hundred peasants.

Our son Eindride  
Safeguards his father,  
Who goes in fearless  
The King defying.

Thus maybe Harald,  
Mindful that Einar  
Has crowned in Norway  
Two men with kingship,

Will grant that peace be,  
On law well grounded;  
This was his promise,  
His people's longing.-

What rolling sand-waves  
Swirl up the roadway!  
What noise is nearing!  
Look forth, my footboy!

-The wind's but blowing!  
Here storms beat wildly;  
The fjord is open,  
The fells low-lying.

The town's unchanged  
Since child I trod it;  
The wind sends hither  
The snarling sea-hounds.

-What flaming thunder  
From thousand voices!  
Steel-weapons redden  
With stains of warfare!

The shields are clashing!  
See, sand-clouds rising,  
Speer-billows rolling  
Round Tambarskelve!

Hard is his fortune!-  
Oh, faithless Harald:  
Death's ravens roving  
Ride o'er thy ting-peace!

Fetch forth the wagon,  
Drive to the fighting!  
At home to cower  
Would cost my life now.

(On the way)

O yeomen, yield not,  
Circle and save him!  
Eindride, aid now  
Thine aged father!

Build a shield-bulwark  
For him bow-bending!  
Death has no allies  
Like Einar's arrows!

And thou, Saint Olaf,  
Oh, for thy son's sake!  
Help him with good words  
In Gimle's high hall!

( Nearer )

Our foes are the stronger...  
They fight now no longer...  
Subduing,  
Pursuing,  
They press to the river,-  
What is it that's done?  
What makes me thus quiver?  
Will fortune us shun?  
What stillness astounding!  
The peasants are staying,  
Their lances now grounding,  
Two dead men surrounding,  
Nor Harald delaying!  
What throngs now enwall  
The ting-hall's high door!...  
Silent they all  
Let me pass o'er!

Where is Eindride  
!-  
Glances of pity

Fear lest they show it,  
Flee lest they greet me...  
So I must know it:  
Two deaths there will meet me!-  
Room! I must see:  
Oh, it is they!-

Can it so be?-  
Yes, it is they!

Fallen the noblest  
Chief of the Northland;  
Best of Norwegian  
Bows is broken.

Fallen is Einar  
Tambarskelve,  
Our son beside him,-  
Eindride!

Murdered with malice,  
He, who to Magnus  
More was than father,  
King Knut the Mighty's  
Son's counselor good.

Slain by assassins  
Svolder's sharp-shooter,  
The lion that leaped on the  
Heath of Lyrskog!

Pride of the peasants  
Snared in a pitfall,  
Time-honored Tronder,  
Tambarskelve.

White-haired and honored,  
Hurlled to the hounds here,-  
Our son beside him,  
Eindride!

Up, up, ye peasants, he has fallen,  
But he who felled him is living!  
Have you not known me? Bergliot,  
Daughter of Haakon from Hjörungavaag;-  
Now I am Tambarskelve's widow.

To you I appeal, peasant-warriors:  
My aged husband has fallen.  
See, see, here is blood on his blanching hair,  
Your heads shall it be on forever,  
For cold it becomes, while vain is your vengeance.

Up, up, warriors, your chieftain has fallen,  
Your honor, your father, the joy of your children,  
Legend of all the valley, hero of all the land,-  
Here he has fallen, will you not avenge him?

Murdered with malice within the king's hall,

The ting-hall, the hall of the law, thus murdered,  
Murdered by him whom the law holds highest,-  
From heaven will lightning fall on the land,  
If thus left unpurged by the flames of vengeance.

Launch the long-ships from land  
Einar's nine long-ships are lying here,  
Let them hasten vengeance on Harald!

If he stood here, Haakon Ivarson,  
If he stood here on the hill, my kinsman,  
The fjord should not save the slayer of Einar,  
And I should not seek you cowards who flinch!

Oh, peasants, hear me, my husband has fallen,  
The high-seat of my thoughts through years half a hundred!  
Overthrown it now is, and by its right side,  
Our only son fell, oh, all our future!  
All is now empty between my two arms;  
Can I ever again lift them up in prayer?  
Or whither on earth shall I betake me?  
If I go and stay in the places of strangers,-  
I shall long for those where we lived together.  
But if I betake me thither,-  
Ah, them, themselves I shall miss.

Odin in Valhall I dare not beseech;  
For him I forsook in days of childhood.  
But the great new God in Gimle?-  
All that I had He has taken!

Vengeance? Who speaks of vengeance?  
Can vengeance the dead awaken,  
Or cover me warm from the cold?  
Find I in it a widow's seat sheltered,  
Solace to cheer a childless mother?

Away with your vengeance! Let me alone!  
Lay him on the wagon, him and our son!  
Come, we will follow them home.  
That God in Gimle, new and fearful, who all has taken,  
Let Him now also take vengeance! Well He knows how!  
Drive slowly! For so drove Einar always;  
-Soon enough we shall come home.

The dogs to-day will not greet us gladly,  
But drearily howl with drooping tails.  
And lifting their heads the horses will listen;  
Neighing they stand, the stable-door watching,  
Eindride's voice awaiting.

In vain for his voice will they hearken,

Nor hears the hall the step of Einar,  
That called before him for all to arise and stand,  
For now came their chieftain.

Too large the house is; I will lock it;  
Workmen, servants send away;  
Sell the cattle and the horses,  
Move far hence and live alone.  
Drive slowly!  
-Soon enough we shall come home.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Choice

April for me I choose!  
In it the old things tumble,  
In it things new refresh us;  
It makes a mighty rumble,-  
But peace is not so precious  
As that his will man shows.

April for me I choose,  
Because it storms and scourges,  
Because it smiles and blesses,  
Because its power purges,  
Because it strength possesses,-

In it the summer grows.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Daniel Schjötz

(DIED OF OVER-EXERTION AS VOLUNTEER MILITARY-SURGEON, 1864)

He gave heed to no Great Power  
But the one that God we call.  
Hastening on to death's high hour,  
He before asked not the Gaul,  
Nor the Briton, nor the others,  
If he too had leave to die  
In the battle of his brothers  
Underneath the Danish sky.  
First to act with ardor youthful,  
First a strong, clear faith to show,  
First to swear in spirit truthful,  
First o'er death's dark bridge to go.

Knowing not, in times so trying  
None would come but he alone,  
Thus he struggled, death defying,  
For the sacred things we own.  
He of thousands here remaining  
Single would the name redeem,  
Sank then with his zeal unwaning  
Down beneath death's silent stream.  
First of souls in hope believing,  
Freedom's right 'gainst wrong to wield,  
First warm drop, full-flowing, cleaving,  
Of our blood on Denmark's shield.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **During A Journey In Sweden**

My boyish heart in thee confided,  
For to the great by thee 't was guided.  
As man, my waiting is for thee,-

The Northern cause with thee, with thee!

Rich lands and talents are thy dower,  
But fallow lie thy wealth and power.

Thou must the North in concord bind,  
Or never shalt thy true self find.

There's longing in thy folk arisen,  
Poetic hope-but yet in prison.  
Though forces great within thee dwell,  
Thou art not wholly sound and well.

Too many things are undertaken,  
Too oft the task is soon forsaken.  
Though rich in promptings of the heart,  
In faith and duty faint thou art.

In danger only hast thou thriven,  
When something great to guard was given.  
When every breast with warmth shall glow  
At Sweden's name, thy strength thou'lt know.

What's thine alone lifts not thy feeling,  
Till honor's cause the skies are pealing,  
Thou hast no joy but daring deed  
In fortune's favor or in need.

For thy fair memories inspiring  
Are far too great, much more requiring:

The Northern cause! Lead thou the way!  
'T will double glory thee repay!

Of all thou canst, this is the greatest,  
Thy duty earliest and latest.  
Thy future rests in its embrace  
With cure for ills that now abase.

Thou land of heart-born fancies thronging,  
Thou land of poetry and longing,  
Fill now thy heart, thy spirit free!

The Northern banner waits for thee!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **For A Charity Fair**

Some poor man in need  
To bless and to feed,  
I bring at its worth,  
This day of my birth,  
A book,-from my youth I must own.  
But Who in His power  
Gave bud and gave flower,  
To bread can transform  
In want's winter-storm  
Each leaf that my Springtime has grown.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **For The Wounded**

A still procession goes  
Amid the battle's booming,  
Its arm the red cross shows;  
It prays in many forms of speech,  
And, bending o'er the fallen,  
Brings peace and home to each.

Not only is it found  
Where bleed the wounds of battle,  
But all the world around.  
It is the love the whole world feels  
In noble hearts and tender,  
While gentle pity kneels;-

It is all labor's dread  
Of war's mad waste and murder,  
Praying that peace may spread;  
It is all sufferers who heed  
The sighing of a brother,  
And know his sorrow's need;-

It is each groan of pain  
Heard from the sick and wounded,  
'T is Christian prayer humane;  
It is their cry who lonely grope,  
'T is the oppressed man's moaning,  
The dying breath of hope;-

This rainbow-bridge of prayers  
Up through the world's wild tempest  
In light of Christ's faith bears:  
That love and loving deeds  
May conquer strife and passion;  
For thus His promise reads.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Forward

'Forward! forward!  
Rang our fathers' battle-cry.  
'Forward! forward!  
Norsemen, be our watchword high!  
All that fires the spirit and makes the heart's faith bright,  
For that we forward go with might  
And faithful fight.

'Forward! forward!  
Whoso loves a home that's free.  
'Forward! forward!  
Freedom's course must ever be.  
Though it shall be tested by doubt and by defeat,  
Who will the losses' count repeat  
When vict'ries greet?

'Forward! forward!  
Whoso trusts in Norway's day.  
'Forward! forward!  
Whoso goes our fathers' way.  
Hid in Northern mountains are spirit-treasures true  
They shall, when dawns the morning's blue,  
Come forth anew.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Frederik Hegel

I  
Dedication

You never came here; but I go  
Here often and am met by you.  
Each room and road here must renew  
The thought of you and your form show  
Standing with helpful hand extended,  
As when long since in trust and deed  
My home you from my foes defended.

...

So often, while I wrote this book,  
The light shone from your genial eye;  
Then we were one, both you and I  
And what in silence being took;  
So here and there the book possesses  
Your spirit and your heart's fresh faith,  
And therefore now your name it blesses.

I love the air, when growing colder  
It, clear and high,  
The purer sky  
Broadens with sense of freedom bolder.

I find in forests joy the keenest  
In autumn days  
When fancy plays,  
And not when they are young and greenest.

I knew a man: in autumn clearness  
His even course,-  
His heart's fine force  
Like autumn sky in soft-hued sheerness.

His memory is, as-when a-swarving  
The cold blasts first  
Of winter burst-  
The gentle flame my room first warming.

When all our outward longings falter,  
And summer's mind  
Within we find,  
Is friendship's feast round autumn's altar.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Frida**

Frida, I knew that thy life-years were counted.  
If but before thee a lifting thought mounted,  
Upward thy gaze turned all wistful to view it,  
As wouldst thou pursue it.

Eyes that so clear saw the wonderful vision  
Looked far away beyond earth's indecision.  
Snow-white unfolded the pinions that later  
Bore thee to the greater.

Speaking or asking thou broughtest me sorrow;  
Eyes thine and words thine seemed wanting to borrow  
Clearness more pure and thoughts, victory gaining  
Beyond my attaining.

When thou wert dancing in all a child's lightness,  
Shaking thy locks like a fountain in brightness,  
Laughing till heaven was opened in gladness  
Over thy gladness,-

Or when affliction in sternness had spoken,  
So that thy heart in that moment seemed broken,  
Far from thy thoughts in thy suffering riven  
Were both earth and heaven,-

Then, oh, I saw then: thy joy and thy grieving  
Ever the bounds of the mortal were cleaving.  
All seems so little where silent we ponder,-  
But room they have yonder.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## From Monte Pincio

Evening is coming, the sun waxes red,  
Radiant colors from heaven are beaming  
Life's lustrous longings in infinite streaming;-  
Glory in death o'er the mountains is spread.  
Cupolas burn, but the fog in far masses  
Over the bluish-black fields softly passes,  
Rolling as whilom oblivion pale;  
Hid is yon valley 'neath thousand years' veil.  
Evening so red and warm  
Glow as the people swarm,  
Notes of the cornet flare,  
Flowers and brown eyes fair.  
Great men of old stand in marble erected,  
Waiting, scarce known and neglected.

Vespers are ringing, through roseate air  
Nebulous floating of tone-sacrifices,  
Twilight in churches now broadens and rises,  
Incense and word fill the evening with prayer.  
Over the Sabines the flame-belt is knotted,  
Shepherds' lights through the Campagna are dotted,  
Rome with her lamps dimly breaks on the sight,-  
Shadowy legend from history's night.  
But to the evening's spell  
Dances the Saltarell';-  
Fireworks flash and play,  
Mora and laughter gay;-  
Colors and tones in all thoughts are enthroning  
Harmony's gracious condoning.

Lost has the light in its soundless affray,  
Heaven its vaulting of dark-blue is framing,  
Where from infinity deep stars are flaming,  
Earth's masses sink into vapor away.  
Fleeing the darkness, the eyes seek the city,  
Meet with its torches a corpse borne in pity;  
These seek the night, but a flag is each light,  
Waving the hope of eternity bright.  
Gaily to dance and wine  
Mandolins give the sign.  
Monkish song, noise of streets,  
Drowned by a drum's stern beats;-  
Through all the dreaming life's arteries flowing,  
Glimpses of daylight are going.

Silence o'er all, and the darker blue sky  
Watches serenely expectant, 'mid cheering  
Dreams of the past and the future that's nearing:-  
Fluctuant gleams in the gray that is nigh.  
But they will gather, and Rome be resurgent,  
Day-dawn from Italy's midnight emergent:  
Cannon shall sound and the bells ring the new,

Mem'ries illumine the future's bright blue!-  
Greeting a bridal pair  
Charming in hope so rare,  
Voices bring soft salute,  
Music of harp and flute.  
Mightier yearnings sweet sleep is beguiling;-  
Lesser dare waken to smiling.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## From The Cantata For N. F. S. Grundtvig

His day was the greatest the Northland has seen,  
It one was with the midnight-sun's wonders serene:  
The light wherein he sat was the light of God's true peace,  
And that has never morning, nor night when it must cease.

In light of God's peace shone the  
history  
he gave,  
The spirit's course on earth that shall conquer the grave.  
Might of God's pure peace thus our  
fathers'  
mighty way  
Before us for example and warning open lay.

In light of God's peace he beheld with watchful eye  
The people at their work and the spirit's strivings high.  
In light of God's pure peace he would have all learning glow,  
And where his word is honored the 'Folk-High-Schools' must grow.

In light of God's peace stood 'mid sorrow and care  
For Denmark's folk his comfort, a castle strong and fair;  
In light of God's pure peace there shall once again be won  
And thousand-fold increased, what seems lost now and undone.

In light of God's peace stands his patriarch-worth,  
The sum and the amen of a manful life on earth.  
In light of God's pure peace how his face shone, lifted up,  
When white-haired at the altar he held th' atoning cup.

In light of God's peace came his word o'er the wave,  
In light of God's pure peace sound the sweet psalms he gave.  
In light of God's pure peace, as its sunbeam curtains fall  
To hide him from us, stands now his memory for all.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Good Cheer

So let these songs their story tell  
To all who in the Northland dwell,  
Since many friends request it.  
(That Finland's folk with them belong  
In the wide realm of Northern song,  
I grateful must attest it.)

I send these songs-and now I find  
Most of them have riot what my mind  
Has deepest borne and favored:  
Some are too hasty, some too brief,  
Some, long in stock, have come to grief,  
Some with raw youth are flavored.

I lived far more than e'er I sang;  
Thought, ire, and mirth unceasing rang  
Around me, where I gusted;  
To be where loud life's battles call  
For me was well-nigh more than all  
My pen on page arrested.

What's true and strong has growing-room,  
And will perhaps eternal bloom,  
Without black ink's salvation,  
And he will be, who least it planned,  
But in life's surging dared to stand,  
The best bard for his nation.

I heard once of a Spanish feast:  
Within the ring a rustic beast,  
A horse, to fight was fated;  
In came a tiger from his cage,  
Who walked about, his foe to gauge,  
And crouching down, then waited.

The people clapped and laughed and cheered,  
The tiger sprang, the horse upreared,  
But none could see him bleeding;  
The tiger tumbling shrinks and backs  
Before the horse's rustic whacks,  
Lies on his head naught heeding.

Then men and women hooted, hissed,  
With glaring eyes and clenched fist  
Out o'er the balcony bending;  
With shouts the tiger's heart they tease,  
Their thirst for blood soon to appease,  
To onset new him sending.

The people clapped and laughed and cheered  
The tiger sprang, the horse upreared;  
No blood to see was given,

For fortune held the horse too dear,  
To him the tiger could not near,  
In flying curves hoof-driven.

To say who won I will not try;  
For lo, this rustic horse am I,  
And on the conflict's going;-  
The city, though, where it occurs,  
And where it cheers and laughter stirs,  
Is known without my showing.

I fight, but have no hate or spite,  
From what I love draw gladness bright,  
My right to wrath reserving.  
It is my blood, my soul, that goes  
In every line of all my blows,  
And guides their course unswerving.

But as I stand here now to-day,  
Nor grudge nor vengeance can me sway,  
To think that foes I'm facing.  
So in return some friendship give  
To one who for the  
cause  
would live,  
With love the North embracing!

But first my poet-path shall be  
With veneration unto  
thee

Who fill'st the North with wonder;  
In wrath thou dawn didst prophesy  
Behind the North's dark morning-sky,  
That lightnings shook and thunder.

Then, milder, thou, by sea and slope,  
The fount of saga, faith, and hope  
Mad'st flow for every peasant;-  
Now from the snow-years' mountain-side  
Thou seest with time's returning tide  
Thine own high image present.

To  
thee  
, then, in whose spring of song  
Finland's 'the thousand lakes' belong  
And sound their thrilling sorrow:-  
Our Northern soul forever heard  
Keeps watch and ward in poet's word  
'Gainst Eastern millions' morrow.

But when I stand in our own home,  
One greets me from the starry dome  
With wealth of light and power.  
There shines he: HENRIK WERGELAND,  
Out over Norway's pallid strand  
In memory's clear hour.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Good Morning**

Day's coming up now, joy's returned,  
Sorrow's dark cloud-castles captured and burned;  
Over the mountain-tops glowing  
Light-king his armies is throwing.  
'Up now, up now!' calls the bird,  
'Up now, up now!' child-voice heard,  
Up now my hope in sunshine. '

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Halfdan Kjerulf

Winter had sought his life's tree to o'erthrow,  
Youthful and strong. But his blood's vernal flow  
Saved it from death through the cold and the maiming;  
Late in the summer bright flowers were flaming,  
Late in the autumn they swelled to completeness,-  
Fruits that were few, but of fragrance and sweetness.

Poets received them to endless seed-sowing,  
Where for his folk endless summer is glowing,-  
While more and more,  
Stricken he hung o'er the death-river's shore,  
Fighting in weakness the winter abhorred,  
Fighting for summer, the singer's reward,  
Fighting while failing, with modesty rare,  
Soon but in prayer.

Summer received him! He now is victorious!  
Now, while they harvest the yellowing corn,  
Now, while the hills hear the notes of the horn,

He  
enters glorious.

Mirrored in him is true poetry's force,  
Marked by our winter, in summer its source.  
E'en as the air with its quivering sheen,  
Leaves of the forests and red peaks serene,  
Waters that wander 'mid meadows delaying  
Sound with the music the sunshine is playing,-  
Poetry also shall leap with new life,  
If it, though failing, is faithful in strife:-  
Leap from death's thronging:-

Soon comes the summer with summer's pure longing.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Hamar-Made Matches

'Here your Hamar-made matches!'-  
Of them these verses I sang;  
A thought to which humor attaches,  
But yet to my heart sparks sprang.

Sparks from the box-side flying  
Sank deep in my memory,  
Till in a light undying  
Two eyes cast their spell on me,-

Light on the fire that's present,  
When faith blazes forth in deed.  
Know, that to every peasant  
Those eyes sent a light in need.

Sent to souls without measure  
The flame of love's message broad,  
Gathering in one treasure  
Fatherland, home, and God.

For it was Herman Anker  
Took of his fathers' gold,  
Loaned it as wisdom's banker,  
Spread riches of thought untold,

Scattered it wide as living  
Seed for the soil to enwrap;  
Flowers spring from his giving  
Over all Norway's lap.

Flowers spring forth, though stony  
The ground where it fell, and cold.  
Never did patrimony  
Bear fruitage so many fold.

Heed this, Norwegian peasant,  
Heed it, you townsman, too!  
That fruit of love's seed may be present,  
Our thanks must fall fresh as dew.

'Here your Hamar-made matches!'  
My thanks kindle fast. And oh!  
This song at your heart-strings catches,  
That kindling your thanks may glow.

The matches hold them in hiding,-  
Scratching one you will find  
The light with a warmth abiding  
Carries them to his mind.

'Here your Hamar-made matches!'  
Only to strike one here,

Our thanks far-away dispatches,  
With peace his fair home to cheer.

His matches in thousands of houses,  
In great and in small as well!-  
The light that thanksgiving arouses  
Shall scatter the darkness fell.

His matches in thousands of houses!-  
Some eve from his factory  
He'll see how thanksgiving arouses  
The land, and its love flames free.

He'll see in the eyes so tender,  
Through gleams that his matches woke,  
The thanks that his nation would render,  
His glistening wreath of oak,-

He'll feel that Norway with double  
The warmth of other lands glows;  
The harvest must more be than trouble,  
When faith in its future grows.

'Here your Hamar-made matches!'  
No phosphorus-poison more!  
The bearer of light up-catches  
The work of the school before:-

From home all the poison taking,  
Hastening the light's advance,  
Longings to warm light waking,  
That lay there and had no chance.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Holger Drachmann

Spring's herald, hail! You've rent the forest's quiet?  
Your hair is wet, and you are leaf-strewn, dusty...  
With your powers lusty  
Have you raised a riot?  
What noise about you of the flood set free,  
That follows at your heels,-turn back and see:  
It spurts upon you! -Was it that you fought for?  
You were in there where stumps and trunks are rotting  
Where long the winter-graybeards have been plotting  
To prison safe that which a lock they wrought for.  
But power gave you Pan, the ancient god!  
They cried aloud and cursed your future lot?  
Your gallant feat they held a robber's fraud?  
-Each spring it happens; but is soon forgot.

You cast you down beside the salt sea's wave.  
It too is free; dances with joy to find you.  
You know the music well; for Pan resigned you  
His art one evening by a viking's grave.

But while on nature's loving lap you lie,  
The tramp of battle on the land you hear,  
You see the steamers as they northward steer  
With freedom's flag;-of your name comes a cry.

And so is torn between the two your breast:-  
Freedom's bold fighters, who now proudly rally,  
In nature's life and legend dreamy rest;  
The former chide, the latter lures to dally.

Your songs sound, some as were a war-horn braying,  
Some softly purl like streams on reedy strand.  
Half nature-sprite and half as man you stand,  
The two not yet one law of life obeying.

But as you seem and as yourself you are  
(The faun's love that the viking's longing tinges),  
We welcome you, no lock is left nor bar,-  
You bring along the door and both the hinges.

Just this it is that we are needing now:  
The spring, the spring! These stifling fumes we bear  
Of royal incense and of monkish snuff,  
Of corpses in romantic cloak and ruff,  
Are bad for morals and for lungs: Fresh air!

Rather a draught of Songs Venetian, cheerful,  
With southern wantonness and color-wonders,-  
Rather 'Two Shots' (although they make us fearful)  
Against our shallow breeding and its blunders.

Spring's herald, hail! come from the forest's choir,

From ocean's roar, from armèd hosts and grim!  
Though sometimes carelessly you struck the lyre,-  
Where rich growth is, one can the rank shoots trim.  
The small trolls jeer the gestures of a giant,  
I love you  
so  
,-unique and self-reliant.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Hunting Song

Round us rolls the heather's sheen,  
Heather's sheen,  
'Neath the falcon of our queen,  
Of our queen.

Birch and cherry balm exhale,  
Balm exhale,  
Loud our horns the cliffs assail,  
Cliffs assail.

Light the air and clear the sky,  
Clear the sky,-  
Hurrah! onward, she is nigh,  
She is nigh.

Hunt ye joy with every breath,  
Every breath,  
Hunt it to the stream of death,  
Stream of death!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Hymn Of The Puritans

Arm me, Lord, my strength redouble,  
Heaven open, heed my trouble!  
God, if my cause Thine shall be,  
Grant a day of victory!  
Fell all Thy foes now!  
Fell all Thy foes now!  
Roll forth Thy thunders, Thy lightning affright them,  
Into the pit, the bottomless, smite them,  
Their seed uproot,  
Tread under foot!  
Send then Thy snowy white dove peace-bringing,  
Unto Thy faithful Thy token winging,  
Olive-branch fair of Thy summer's fruition  
After the deluge of sin's punishment!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **I passed by the house**

I passed by the house one summer day,  
Morning sunshine upon it lay;  
Toward the windows that blood-red burned  
Flaming my soul was turned, was turned.  
There spring had found me  
And captive bound me  
To lissome hands and soft lips enthralling,  
To smiles now stained by the teardrops falling.

Till the view from my vision dies,  
To it backward I send my eyes;  
All that was becomes new and near,  
The forgotten grows warm and dear;  
Mem'ries wander,  
While this I ponder,  
And from the springtime all love's sweet dreaming  
Forward and back in my soul is streaming.

Joyous that time and joyous now,  
Sorrow that time and .sorrow now.  
Sun on meadows bedewed appears,  
Soul in mem'ries of smiles and tears.  
When they waking  
Their bounds are breaking,  
When streams their ebbing with sinking power,  
The soul bears poetry's bud and flower.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **If only you knew it**

I dare never speak up to you,  
For you to look down would not do,  
But always you are there each day,  
And always I wander this way.  
Our thoughts go by stealth to make search and renew it,  
But neither dares question nor give answer due it;  
If only you knew it!

When constantly I could be found,  
You often in pride on me frowned;  
But now that I rarely appear,  
I see that you wait for me here!  
Two eyes, oh, two eyes made a snare and then drew it,  
And who would escape must beware, and eschew it!  
If only you knew it!

Yes, if you but guessed, this might be  
A poem for you made by me,  
Whose billowy lines just now fly  
Up where you stand graceful and high!  
But look you, this knowledge, to no purpose grew it,  
I farther will go, Heaven guard, lest we rue it,-  
If only you knew it!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **In a heavy hour**

Be glad when danger presses  
Each power your soul possesses!  
In greater strain  
Your strength shall gain,  
Till greater vict'ry blesses!  
Supports may break in pieces,  
Your friends may have caprices,  
But you shall see,  
The end will be,  
Your need of crutches ceases.  
-'T is clear,  
Whom God makes lonely,  
To him He comes more near.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **In the forest**

List to the forest-voice murmuring low:  
All that it saw when alone with its laughter,  
All that it suffered in times that came after,  
Mournful it tells, that the wind may know.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Ingerid Sletten

Ingerid Sletten of Sillejord  
Neither gold nor silver did own,  
But a little hood of gay wool alone,  
Her mother had given of yore.

A little hood of gay wool alone,  
With no braid nor lining, was here;  
But parent love made it ever dear,  
And brighter than gold it shone.

She kept the hood twenty years just so:  
"Be it spotless," softly she cried,  
"Until I shall wear it once as bride,  
When I to the altar go."

She kept the hood thirty years just so:  
"Be it spotless," softly she cried,  
"Then wear it I will, a gladsome bride,  
When it to our Lord I show."

She kept the hood forty years just so,  
With her mother ever in mind.  
"Little hood, be with me to this resigned,  
That ne'er to the altar we'll go."

She steps to the chest where the hood has lain,  
And seeks it with swelling heart;  
She guides her hand to its place apart,--  
But never a thread did remain.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Ivar Ingemundson's Lay

Wherefore have I longings,  
When to live them strength is lacking?  
And wherefore see I,  
If I see but sorrow?

Flight of my eye to the great and distant  
Dooms it to gales of darkening doubt;  
But fleeing backward to the present,  
It's prisoned in pain and pity.

For I see a land with no leader,  
I see a leader with no land.  
The land how heavy-laden  
The leader how high his longing!

Might the men but know it,  
That he is here among them!  
But they see a man in fetters,  
And leave him to lie there.

Round the ship a storm is raging,  
At the rudder stands a fool. Who can save it?  
He, who below the deck is longing,  
Half-dead and in fetters.

(Looking upward)

Hear how they call Thee  
And come with arms uplifted!  
They have their savior at hand,  
And Thou sayest it never?

Shall they, then, all thus perish,  
Because the one seems absent?  
Wilt Thou not let the fool die,  
That life may endure in many?

What means that solemn saying:

One  
shall suffer for many?  
But many suffer for one.  
Oh, what means it?

The wisdom Thou gavest  
Wearies me with guesswork.  
The light Thou hast dealt me  
Leads me to darkness.

Not me alone, moreover,  
But millions and millions!  
Space unending spans not all the questions

From earth here and up toward heaven.

Weakness cowers in walls of cloisters,  
But wills of power press onward,  
And thronging, with longing,  
They thrust one another out of the lands.-

Whither? Before their eyes is night,  
'In Nazareth a light is set!' one says aloud,  
A hundred thousand say it;  
All see it now: To Nazareth!

But the half-part perish from hunger by the wayside,  
The other half by the sword of the heathen,  
The pest awaits the pilgrim in Nazareth,-  
Wast Thou there, or wast Thou not there?

Oh, where art Thou?  
The whole world now awakens,  
And on the way is searching  
And seeking after Thee!

Or wast Thou in the hunger?  
Wast Thou in the pest?  
Wast Thou in the sword of the heathen?

Saltest Thou with the salt of wrath?  
Refinest Thou with suffering's fire?  
Hast Thou millions of millions hidden in Thy future,  
Whom Thou thus wilt save to freedom?

Oh, to them are the thousands that now suffer  
But  
one

And that one I would beseech Thee for-  
Nothing!

I follow a little brook  
And find it leads to an ocean,  
I see here a little drop,  
And swelling in mist it mounts a mighty cloud.

See, how I'm tossed so will-less  
By troublous waves of doubt,  
The wind overturned my little boat,  
The wreck is all my refuge.

Lead me, lead me,  
I see nowhere land!  
Lift me, lift me,  
I nowhere footing find!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Johan Ludvig Heiberg 1860

To the grave they bore him sleeping,  
Him the aged, genial gardener;  
Now the children gifts are heaping  
From the flower-bed he made.

There the tree that he sat under,  
And the garden gate is open,  
While we cast a glance and wonder  
Whether some one sits there still.

He is gone. A woman only  
Wanders there with languid footsteps,  
Clothed in black and now so lonely,  
Where his laughter erst rang clear.

As a child when past it going,  
Through the fence she looked with longing,  
Now great tears so freely flowing  
Are her thanks that she came in.

Fairy-tales and thoughts high-soaring  
Whispered to him 'neath the foliage.  
She flits softly, gathering, storing  
Them as solace for her woe.

\*

Far his wanderings once bore him,  
Bore this aged, genial searcher;  
One who listening sat before him  
Much could learn from time to time.

Life and letters were his ladder  
Up toward that which few discover,  
Thought's wide realm, with vision gladder  
He explored, each summit scaled.

In his manhood he defended  
All that greatness has and beauty;  
Later he the stars attended  
In their silent course to God.

\*

Older men remember rather  
"New Year!" ringing o'er the Northland.  
How it power had to gather  
Leaders to a greater age

Do you him remember leaping  
Forth, his horn so gladly winding,  
Back the mob on all sides sweeping

From the progress of the great?

Play of thought 'mid tears and laughter,  
Fauns and children were about him;  
Freedom's beacons high thereafter  
Kindled slowly of themselves.

And his words soon found a hearing,  
Peace of heart flowed from his music;  
All the land thrilled to the nearing  
Of a great prophetic choir.

\*\*

In his manhood he defended  
All that greatness has and beauty;  
Later he the stars attended  
In their silent course to God.

Northern flowers were his pleasure,  
As an aged genial gardener,  
From his nation's springtime treasure  
Culling seed for deathless growth.

Now with humor, now sedately,  
He kept planting or uprooting,  
While the Danish beech-tree stately  
Gave his soul its evening peace.

There the tree we saw him under,  
And the garden gate is open,  
While we cast a glance and wonder  
Whether some one sits there still.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Kaare's song**

KAARE

What wakens the billows, while sleeps the wind?  
What looms in the west released?  
What kindles the stars, ere day's declined,  
Like fires for death's dark feast?

ALL

God aid thee here, our earl,  
God aid thee here, our earl,  
It is Helga, who comes unto Orkney.

KAARE

What drives the fierce dragon to ride the foam,  
While billows with blood are red?  
The sea-fowl are shrieking, they seek their home,  
And hover around my head.

ALL

God aid thee here, our earl,  
God aid thee here, our earl,  
It is Helga, who comes unto Orkney.

KAARE

What maiden so strange to the strand draws nigh,  
In light with soft music nears?  
What is it that makes all the flowers die,  
What fills all your eyes with tears?

ALL

God aid thee here, our earl,  
God aid thee here, our earl,  
It is Helga, who comes unto Orkney.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## King frederik the seventh

Our King is bereft of a trusty friend!  
And in dismay  
We lower our banners and sad attend  
On his burial day.  
But Denmark, in sorrow most deep thou waitest,  
For fallen the life that was warmest, greatest,  
And fallen the tower  
Of mightiest power.  
Bewailing the death of their kingly chief,  
Men voice their grief.

For Denmark's salvation the man was born  
Who now is dead.  
When banished in youth from the court in scorn,  
To his people he fled.  
There throve he right well, there grew he together  
With peasants and sailors in foul and fair weather,  
While fullness of living  
Its schooling was giving;  
When ready for Denmark was laid the snare,  
Then he was there!

Now soon it was plain, he was peasant-skulled  
For their tricks; and hence  
The traitors' shrewd schemings were all annulled  
By his bit of sense.  
He knew but one thing; - what his people thought them,  
And therefore in danger he freedom brought them.  
The whole was his vision,  
He would no scission;  
His words were but few, and of these the key:  
'It shall not be!'

He stood by the helm like a sailor good,  
In no storm remiss;  
Of praise the tribute he never would,  
But he shall have  
this  
!  
The ship to the North he unswerving directed, -  
In storm or in fog, exposed or protected; -  
And fear allaying,  
All folk were saying:  
'He isn't so stupid as people tell,  
For all goes well!'

'On deck every man!' was his last command,  
'There's storm again!'  
When answered the cry from the mast-head: 'Land!'  
Oh, then, just then,  
Were loosed from the helm the true hands that were steering,  
In death he sank down, while the ship began veering-

No, never veering!  
To the course adhering!  
Now, Denmark, united, with all thy force  
Hold straight his course!

He made it his honor, in line to stand,  
No rank to know;  
But shoulder to shoulder to lend a hand,  
And pride forego.  
They gather now fruit of his faithful training:  
Well drilled, every man at his post is straining.  
The course is steady,  
For tried and ready  
Is many a helmsman, and all their will  
Is 'Northward still!'

Naught else can they do now, but with good cheer  
Hold out they must,  
Stand guard in the darkness and have no fear,  
In God their trust.  
It is sultry and silent, and yearning in sorrow  
All breathless they listen and wait for the morrow,-  
'T is time for waiting,  
Till, night abating,  
The eastern sky reddens and bright dawn speeds  
The day of deeds!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Lambkin Mine**

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,  
Though it often be hard to climb  
Over the rocks upswinging,  
Follow thy bell's sweet ringing!

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,  
Take good care of that fleece-coat thine!  
Sewed to one and another,  
Warm it shall keep my mother.

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,  
Feed and fatten thy flesh so fine!  
Know, you dear little sinner,  
Mother will have it for dinner!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Landfall

And that was Olaf Trygvason,  
Going o'er the North Sea grim,  
Straight for his home and kingdom steering,  
Where none awaited him.  
Now the first mountains tower;  
Are they walls, on the ocean that lower?

And that was Olaf Trygvason,  
Fast the land seemed locked at first,  
All of his youthful, kingly longings  
Doomed on the cliffs to burst,-  
Until a skald discovered  
Shining domes in the cloud-mists, that hovered.

And that was Olaf Trygvason,  
Seemed to see before his eyes  
Mottled and gray some timeless temple  
Lifting white domes to the skies.  
Sorely he longed to win it,  
Stand and hallow his young faith within it.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Lector thaasen

I read once of a flower that lonely grew,  
Apart, with trembling stem and pale of hue;  
The mountain-world of cold and strife  
Gave little life  
And less of color.

A botanist the flower chanced to see  
And glad exclaimed: Oh, this must sheltered be,  
Must seed produce, renewing birth,  
In sun-warmed earth  
Become a thousand.

But as he dug and drew it from the ground,  
Strange glitterings upon his hands he found;  
For to its roots clung dust of golden hue;  
The flower grew  
On golden treasure!

And from the region wide came all the youth  
To see the wonder; they divined the truth:  
Here lay their country's future might;  
A ray of light  
From God that flower!-

This I recall now even while I mourn;  
The Lord of life has lifted him and borne  
From mountain-cold and wintry air  
To fruitage fair  
In warmth eternal.

For where the roots were of that life replete,  
What gleams and glitters! See, they ran to meet  
The shafts of wisdom's goodly mines,  
The gold that shines  
In veins of God's thought.

Now he is lifted up, to light are brought  
The riches he to guard so faithful sought.  
The treasures of our past are there,  
And glintings rare  
Of future riches.

Come, Norway's youth! Unearth to use the hoard  
That round this heaven-borne flower's roots was stored!  
To you his message! Hear and heed!  
Achieve in deed  
His dream and longing!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Love Song

Have you love for me,  
Yours my love shall be,  
While the days of life are flowing.  
Short was summer's stay,  
Grass now pales away,  
With our play will come regrowing.

What you said last year  
Sounds yet in my ear,--  
Birdlike at the window sitting,  
Tapping, trilling there,  
Singing, in would bear  
Joy the warmth of sun befitting.

Litli-litli-lu,  
Do you hear me too,  
Youth behind the birch-trees biding?  
Now the words I send,  
Darkness will attend,  
May be you can give them guiding.

Take it not amiss!  
Sang I of a kiss?  
No, I surely never planned it.  
Did you hear it, you?  
Give no heed thereto,  
Haste I make to countermand it.

Oh, good-night, good-night  
Dreams enfold me bright  
Of your eyes' persuasive mildness.  
Many a silent word  
From their corners heard,--  
Breaking forth with gentle wildness.

Now my song is still;  
Is there more you will?  
All the tones, to me returning,  
Laughing, luring, soar;  
Did you wish me more?  
Still and warm the night is yearning.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Love Thy Neighbor**

Love thy neighbor, to Christ be leal!  
Crush him never with iron-heel,  
Though in the dust he's lying!  
All the living responsive await  
Love with power to recreate,  
Needing alone the trying.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Magnus the blind**

'Oh, let me look once again and see  
Starlight the heavens o'ersweeping!  
Begged young Magnus on bended knee,  
It was sore to see.  
All the women afar were weeping.

'Oh, till to-morrow! The mountains to see  
And ocean its blue displaying,  
Only once, and then let it be!  
Thus he bent the knee,  
While his friends for mercy were praying.

'Oh, in the church let God's blood so bright  
Be the last blessing that greets me!  
It shall bathe with a flood of light  
Through eternal night  
My eyes, when the darkness meets me!

Deep sank the steel, and each seeing eye  
Lightning-like night had swallowed.  
'Magnus, King Magnus, good-by, good-by!'  
-'Oh, good-by, good-by,-  
You who eighteen summers me followed!'

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Marit's Song

"Dance!" called the fiddle,  
Its strings loudly giggled,  
The bailiff's man wriggled  
Ahead for a spree.

"Hold!" shouted Ola  
And tripped him to tumbling,  
The bailiff's man humbling,  
To maidens' great glee.

"Hop!" said then Erik,  
His foot struck the ceiling,  
The beams rang their pealing,  
The walls gave a shriek.

"Stop!" said now Elling,  
And seizing him collared,  
He held him and hollered:  
"You still are too weak!"

"Hei!" said then Rasmus,  
Fair Randi embracing:  
"Be quick now in placing  
The kiss that you know!"

"Nay!" answered Randi.  
A slapping she gave him,  
And from her she drave him:  
"Here take what I owe!"

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Master or slave

Lo, this land that lifts around it  
Threatening peaks, while stern seas bound it,  
With cold winters, summers bleak,  
Curtly smiling, never meek,  
'Tis the giant we must master,  
Till he work our will the faster.  
He shall carry, though he clamor,  
He shall haul and saw and hammer,  
Turn to light the tumbling torrent,-  
All his din and rage abhorrent  
Shall, if we but do our duty,  
Win for us a realm of beauty.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## May seventeenth

Wergeland's statue on May seventeenth  
Saw the procession. And as its rear-guard,  
Slow marching masses,  
Strong men, and women with flower-decked presence;  
Come now the peasants, come now the peasants.

Österdal's forest's magnificent chieftain  
Bore the old banner. Soon as we see it  
Blood-red uplifted,  
Greet it the thousands in thought of its story:  
That is our glory, that is our glory!

Never that lion bore crown that was foreign,  
Never that cloth was by Dannebrog cloven.  
I saw the  
future

When with that banner by Wergeland's column  
Peasants stood solemn, peasants stood solemn.

Most of our loss in the times that have vanished,  
Most of our victories, most of our longing,  
Most that is vital:  
Deeds of the past and the future's bold daring  
Peasants are bearing, peasants are bearing.

Sorely they suffered for sins once committed,  
But they arise now. Here in the Storting  
Stalwart they prove it,  
All, as they come from our land's every region,  
Peasants Norwegian, peasants Norwegian.

Hold what they won, with a will to go farther;  
Whole we must have independence and honor!  
All of us know it:  
Wergeland's summer bears soon its best flower,-  
Power in peasants, peasants in power.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Mountain Song

When you will the mountains roam  
And your pack are making,  
Put therein not much from home,  
Light shall be your taking!  
Drag no valley-fetters strong  
To those upland spaces,  
Toss them with a joyous song  
To the mountains' bases!

Birds sing Hail! from many a bough,  
Gone the fools' vain talking,  
Purer breezes fan your brow,  
You the heights are walking.  
Fill your breast and sing with joy!  
Childhood's mem'ries starting,  
Nod with blushing cheeks and coy,  
Bush and heather parting.  
If you stop and listen long,  
You will hear upwelling  
Solitude's unmeasured song  
To your ear full swelling;  
And when now there purls a brook,  
Now stones roll and tumble,  
Hear the duty you forsook  
In a world-wide rumble.

Fear, but pray, you anxious soul,  
While your mem'ries meet you!  
Thus go on; the perfect whole  
On the top shall greet you.  
Christ, Elijah, Moses, there  
Wait your high endeavor.  
Seeing them you'll know no care,  
Bless your path forever.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **My fatherland**

I will fight for my land,  
I will work for my land,  
Will it foster with love, in my faith, in my child.  
I will eke every gain,  
I will seek boot for bane,  
From its easternmost bound to the western sea wild.

Here is sunshine enough,  
Here is seed-earth enough,  
If by us, if by us all love's duty were done.  
Here is will to create;  
Though our burdens be great,  
We can lift up our land, if we all lift as one.

In the past we went wide  
O'er the sea's surging tide,  
And the Norman's high walls stand on many a shore.  
But our flag flies its way  
Ever farther to-day  
And is red with life's vigor as never before.

Great our future shall be;  
For the Northern lands three  
Shall unite once again and their true selves shall know.  
Give your strength and your deed,  
Where you nearest see need,  
As a brook to the river that forward shall flow.

Yes, this land where we dwell,  
Oh, we love it so well,  
All was, all it is, all it can be again.  
As our love had its birth  
In this homeland's dear earth,  
Shall the seed of our love bring it increase again.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Nils Finn**

Now little Nils Finn had away to go;  
The skis were too loose at both heel and toe.  
--"That's too bad!" rumbled yonder.

Then little Nils Finn in the snow set his feet:  
"You ugliest troll, you shall never me cheat!"  
--"Hee-ho-ha!" rumbled yonder.

Nils Finn with his staff beat the snow till it blew  
"Your trollship, now saw you how hapless it flew?"  
--"Hit-li-hu!" rumbled yonder.

Nils Finn pushed one ski farther forward with might;  
The other held fast,--he reeled left and right.  
--"Pull it up!" rumbled yonder.

Nils' tears wet the snow, while he kicked and he struck;  
The more that he kicked there, the deeper he stuck.  
--"That was good!" rumbled yonder.

The birch-trees, they danced, and the pine-trees said "Hoo!"  
They more were than one,--were a hundred and two.  
--"Know your way?" rumbled yonder.

A laugh shook the ridge till it made the snow fly;  
But Nils clenched his fists and he swore 't was a lie.  
--"Now beware!" rumbled yonder.

The snow-field yawned wide, and the heavens came low;  
Nils thought 't was now time for him also to go.  
--"Is he gone?" rumbled yonder.--

Two skis in the snow looked about everywhere,  
But saw nothing much; for there was nothing there.  
--"Where is Nils?" rumbled yonder.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Norse nature

(In Ringerike During The Student Meeting Of 1869)

We wander and sing with glee  
Of glorious Norway, fair to see.  
Let sweetly the tones go twining  
In colors so softly shining  
On mountain, forest, fjord, and shore,  
'Neath heaven's azure arching o'er.

The warmth of the nation's heart,  
The depth, the strength, its songs impart,  
Here opens its eyes to greet you,  
Rejoicing just now to meet you,  
And giving, grateful for the chance,  
In love a self-revealing glance.

Here wakened our history first,  
Here Halfdan dreamed of greatness erst,  
In vision of hope beholding  
The kingdom's future unfolding,  
And  
Nore  
stood and summons gave,  
While forth to conquest called the wave.

Here singing we must unroll  
Of our dear land the pictured scroll!  
Let calm turn to storm of wildness,  
Bring might into bonds of mildness:  
Then Norsemen mustering, each shall see  
This is our land's whole history.

To them first our way we wing,  
The hundred harbors in the spring,  
Where follow fond love and yearning,  
When sea-ward the ships are turning.  
For Norway's weal pure prayers exhale  
From sixty thousand men that sail.

See sloping the skerried coasts,  
With gulls and whales and fishing-posts,  
And vessels in shelter riding,  
While boats o'er the sea are gliding,  
And nets in fjord and seines in sound,  
And white with spawn the ocean's ground.

See Lofoten's tumult grand,  
Where tow'ring cliffs in ocean stand,  
Whose summits the fogs are cleaving,  
Beneath them the surges heaving,  
And all is darkness, mystery, dread,  
But 'mid the tumult sails are spread.

Here ships of the Arctic sea;  
Through snow and gloom their course must be;  
Commands from the masthead falling  
The boats toward the ice are calling;  
And shot on shot and seal on seal,  
And souls and bodies strong as steel.

On mountains we now shall guest,  
When eventide to all brings rest,  
In dairy on highland meadow,  
On hay-field 'neath slanting shadow,  
While to the alphorn's tender tone  
Great Nature's voice responds alone.

But quickly we must away,  
If a11 the land we would survey,-  
The mines of our metal treasures,  
The hills of our hunters' pleasures,  
The foam-white river's rush and noise,  
The timber-driver's foot-sure poise.

Returning, we linger here,  
These valleys broad to us are dear,  
Whose men in their faithful living  
To Norway are honor giving;  
Their fathers, strong in brain and brawn,  
Lent luster to our morning-dawn.

We wander and sing with glee  
Of glorious Norway fair to see.  
Our present to labor binds us,  
Each how of the past reminds us,  
Our future shall be sure and bright,  
As God we trust and do the right.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Norway, norway**

Norway, Norway,  
Rising in blue from the sea's gray and green,  
Islands around like fledglings tender,  
Fjord-tongues with slender,  
Tapering tips in the silence seen.  
Rivers, valleys,  
Mate among mountains, wood-ridge and slope  
Wandering follow. Where the wastes lighten,  
Lake and plain brighten  
Hallow a temple of peace and hope.  
Norway, Norway,  
Houses and huts, not castles grand,  
Gentle or hard,  
Thee we guard, thee we guard,  
Thee, our future's fair land.

Norway, Norway,  
Glistening heights where skis swiftly go,  
Harbors with fishermen, salts, and craftsmen,  
Rivers and raftsmen,  
Herdsman and horns and the glacier-glow.  
Moors and meadows,  
Runes in the woodlands, and wide-mown swaths,  
Cities like flowers, streams that run dashing  
Out to the flashing  
White of the sea, where the fish-school froths.  
Norway, Norway,  
Houses and huts, not castles grand,  
Gentle or hard,  
Thee we guard, thee we guard,  
Thee, our future's fair land.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Norwegian seamen's song

Norwegian seamen are  
A folk grown strong 'neath sail and spar;  
Where boats can find a way,  
The best men there are they.  
On high seas or at home,  
In calm or when the storm-waves comb,  
To God their prayer they make,  
Their lives they gladly stake.

Incessant is their strife,  
They wage with death a war for life,  
And dear their souls they sell  
In conflicts none can tell.  
All that is commonplace  
In history seldom leaves its trace,  
And often none is there,  
The tidings home to bear.

But fishing-boats in need  
Have shown so many a daring deed  
Of courage fine and skill,  
Though unrecorded still.  
And many a seaman's head  
A wreath of sea-weed wore when dead,  
Whose name should shine in gold  
Among great heroes bold.

Saint Olaf's Cross's praise  
Would on that pilot fitly blaze  
Who saved a hundred men,  
And hundred once again.  
To many a boy so young,  
Who riding home to boat's keel clung,  
His father set on board,  
We honor should accord.

In Norway's mountain-coast  
Our land's own mother-breast we boast,  
With food for us and tears  
For sons whom danger nears.  
In it each deed has lot,  
And there no brave son is forgot,  
From Hafurfjord's great day  
To the last castaway.

This each one felt and found  
Who homeward came and looked around;  
This each one felt who went,  
In the last look he sent.  
They felt the ocean o'er:  
Their ships our country's fortune bore;  
Honor and power it sought,-

And these the white sails brought.

Hurrah for them to-day  
Who the Norwegian flag display!  
Hurrah for pilots true  
Who forth to meet them flew!  
Hurrah for them who ply  
Their fishing-boats 'twixt sea and sky!  
Hurrah for all our boast,  
Our skerry-skirted coast!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Norwegian students' greeting with a procession to professor welhaven**

Hear us, O age-laden singer!  
Streams of your tones are returning,  
Touching your heart!  
Spirit of youth is their bringer,  
Under your window with yearning  
Called by your art.  
Now our soul's echoes abounding  
Soar in the blue,  
In the sun-shimmering blue,  
High where your silvery song-notes are sounding.

Smile on your labor now lightened,  
You who in winter perfected  
Seeds to be sown!  
All that your courage has brightened,  
All that your pity protected,  
Now it is grown;  
Over your shoulders upswinging,  
Folds round your frame,  
Bringing in roses your name,  
Joyous the sprite of your poetry bringing.

Onward our life is now marching,  
Banner-like high thoughts are flying,  
Lifted to view.  
One 'mid the foremost o'erarching  
Leads where the pathway is lying,-  
It came from you!  
Runes of our past with their warning  
Carved on its shaft,  
Show us the spring you have quaffed,  
Leading our land to the light of the morning.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Oh, when will you stand forth?**

Oh, when will you stand forth, who with strength can bring aid,  
To strike down the injustice and lies  
That my house have beset, and with malice blockade  
Every pathway I out for my powers have laid,  
And would hidden means find  
With deceit and with hate  
To set watch on my mind  
And defile every plate  
In my beautiful home where defenseless we wait?

Oh, when will you stand forth? This detraction through years  
For my people has made me an oaf,  
Hides my poetry's fount in the fog of its fleers,  
So it merely a pool of self-worship appears;  
Like a clumsy troll I  
Am contemned with affront,  
Whom all 'cultured' folk fly,  
Or yet gather to hunt,  
That their hunger of hate at a feast they may blunt.

When I publish a book: 'It is half like himself;'  
If I speak, 't is for vanity's sake.  
What I build in the stage-world of fancy's free elf  
Is but formed from my fatuous self.  
When for faith I contend  
And our land's ancient ways,  
When the bridge I defend  
From our fathers' great days,  
'Tis because my poor breast no king's 'Order' displays.

Oh, when will you stand forth, who shall sunder in twain  
All this slander so stifling and foul,  
And shall sink in the sea all the terror insane  
That they have of heart-passion and will-wielding brain,-  
And with love shall enfold  
A soul's faith wide and deep,  
That in want and in cold  
Would its morning-watch keep  
Undismayed, till the light all the host shall ensweep?

Come, thou Spirit of Norway, God-given of yore  
In the stout giant-conquering Thor!  
While the lightning thou ridest, thy answer's loud roar  
Drowns the din that the dwarfs in defiance outpour;  
Thou canst waken with might  
All our longings to soar,  
Thou canst strengthen in right  
What united we swore,  
When at Hafur thy standard in honor we bore.

Hail, thou Spirit of Norway! To think but of thee  
Makes so small all the small things I felt.

To thy coming I hallow me, wholly to thee,  
And I humbly look up to thy face, unto thee,  
And I pray for a song  
With thy tongue's stirring sound,  
That I true may and strong  
In the crisis be found,  
To rouse heroes for thee on our forefathers' ground.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Olaf trygvason**

Broad the sails o'er the North Sea go;  
High on deck in the morning glow  
Erling Skjalgsson from Sole  
Scans all the sea toward Denmark:  
'Cometh never Olaf Trygvason?'

Six and fifty the ships are there,  
Sails are let down, toward Denmark stare  
Sun-reddened men;-then murmur:  
'Where is the great Long Serpent?  
Cometh never Olaf Trygvason?'

When the sun in the second dawn  
Cloudward rising no mast had drawn,  
Grew to a storm their clamor:  
'Where is the great Long Serpent?  
Cometh never Olaf Trygvason?'

Silent, silent that moment bound,  
Stood they all; for from ocean's ground  
Sighed round the fleet a muffled:  
'Taken the great Long Serpent,  
Fallen is Olaf Trygvason.'

Ever since, through so many a year,  
Norway's ships must beside them hear,  
Clearest in nights of moonshine:  
'Taken the great Long Serpent,  
Fallen is Olaf Trygvason.'

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Old heltberg

I went to a school that was little and proper,  
Both for church and for state a conventional hopper,  
Feeding rollers that ground out their grist unwaiting;  
And though it was clear from the gears' frequent grating  
They rarely with oil of the spirit were smeared,  
Yet no other school in that region appeared.

We  
had  
to go there till older;-though sorry,  
I went there also,-but reveled in Snorre.

The self-same books, the same so-called education,  
That teacher after teacher, by decrees of power royal,  
Into class after class pounds with self-negation,  
And that only bring promotion to them that are loyal!-  
The self-same books, the same so-called education,  
Quickly molding to one type all the men in the land,  
An excellent fellow who on  
one  
leg can stand,  
And as runs an anchor-rope reel off his rote-narration!-  
The self-same books, the same so-called education  
From Hammerfest to Mandal-('tis the state's creation  
Of an everything-and-every-one-conserving dominion,  
Wherein all the finer folk have but one opinion!)-  
The self-same books, the same so-called education  
My comrades devoured; but my appetite failed me,  
And that fare I refused, till, to cure what had ailed me,  
Home leaving I leaped o'er those bars of vexation.  
What I met on the journey, what I thought in each case,  
What arose in my soul in the new-chosen place,  
Where the future was lying,-this to tell is refractory,  
But I'll give you a picture of the 'student factory.'

Full-bearded fellows of thirty near died of  
Their hunger for lore, as they slaved by the side of  
Rejected aspirants with faces hairless,  
Like sparrows in spring, scatter-brained and careless.  
-Vigorous seamen whose adventurous mind  
First drove them from school that real life they might find-  
But now to cruise wide on the sea they were craving,  
Where the flag of free thought o'er all life wide is waving.  
-Bankrupted merchants who their books had wooed  
In their silent stores, till their creditors sued  
And took from them their goods. Now they studied 'on credit.'  
Beside them dawdling dandies. Near in scorn have I said it!  
-'Non-Latin' law-students, young and ambitious,  
'Prelims,' theologs, with their preaching officious;  
-Cadets that in arm or in leg had a hurt;  
-Peasants late in learning but now in for a spurt:-

Here

they all wished through their Latin to drive  
In  
one  
year or in two,-not in eight or in five.  
They hung over benches, 'gainst the walls they were lying,  
In each window sat two, one the edge was just trying  
Of his new-sharpened knife on an ink-spattered desk.  
Through two large open rooms what a spectacle grotesque!

At one end, half in dreams, Aasmund Olavsen Vinje's  
Long figure and spare, a contemplative genius;  
Thin and intense, with the color of gypsum,  
And a coal-black, preposterous beard, Henrik Ibsen.  
I, the youngest of the lot, had to wait for company  
Till a new litter came in, after Yule Jonas Lie.

But the 'boss' who ruled there with his logical rod,  
'Old Heltberg' himself, was of all the most odd!  
In his jacket of dog's skin and fur-boots stout  
He waged a hard war with his asthma and gout.  
No fur-cap could hide from us his forehead imperious,  
His classical features, his eye's power mysterious.  
Now erect in his might and now bowed by his pain,  
Strong thoughts he threw out, and he threw not in vain.  
If the suffering grew keener and again it was faced  
By the will in his soul, and his body he braced  
Against onset after onset, then his eyes were flaming  
And his hands were clenched hard, as if deep were his shaming  
That he seemed to have yielded! Oh, then we were sharing  
Amazed all the grandeur of conflict, and bearing  
Home with us a symbol of the storms of that age,  
When 'Wergeland's wild hunt' o'er our country could rage!  
There was power in the men who took part in that play,  
There was will in the power that then broke its way.  
Now alone he was left, forgotten in his corner:-  
But in deeds was a hero,-let none dare to be his scorner!  
He freed thought from the fetters that the schools inherit,  
Independent in teaching, he led by the spirit;  
Personality unique: for with manner anarchic  
He carved up the text; and absolute-monarchic  
Was his wrath at mistakes; but soon it subsided,  
Or, controlled, into noblest pathos was guided,  
Which oft turned in recoil into self-irony  
And a downpour of wit letting no one go free.-  
So he governed his 'horde,' so we went through the country,  
The fair land of the classics, that we harried with effront'ry!  
How Cicero, Sallust, and Virgil stood in fear  
On the forum, in the temple, when we ravaging drew near!  
'T was again. the Goths' invasion to the ruin of Rome,  
It was Thor's and Odin's spirit over Jupiter's home,  
-And the old man's 'grammar' was a dwarf-forged hammer,  
When he swung it and smote with sparks, flames, and clamor.

The herd of 'barbarians' he thus headed on their way  
Had no purpose to settle and just there to stay.  
'Non-Latins' they remained, by no alien thought enslaved,  
And found their true selves, as the foreign foes they braved.

In conquering the language we learned the laws of thought,  
And following him, his fine longing we caught  
For wanderings and wonders, all the conqueror's zeal,  
To win unknown lands and their mysteries reveal.  
Each lesson seemed a vision that henceforth was ours,  
Inspiring each youth's individual powers.  
His pictures made pregnant our creative desire,  
His wit was our testing in an ordeal of fire,  
His wisdom was our balance, to weigh things great and small,  
His pathos told of passions, burning, but held in thrall,

Oft the stricken hero scarce his tedious toil could brook,  
He wished to go and write, though it were but a single book,  
To show a  
little  
what he was, and show it to the world:  
He loosed his cable daily, but ne'er his sails unfurled.

His 'grammar' was not printed! And he passed from mortal ken  
To where the laws of thought are not written with a pen.  
His 'grammar' was not printed! But the life that it had,  
In ink's prolonging power did not need to be clad.  
It lived in his soul, so mighty, so warm,  
That a thousand books' life seems but poor empty form.  
It lives in a host of independent men,  
To whose thought he gave life and who give it again  
In the school, at the bar, in the church, and Storting's hall,  
In poetry and art,-whose deeds and lifework all  
Have proved to be the freer and the broader in their might,  
Because Heltberg had given their youth higher flight.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Ole gabriel ueland

Of long toil 't is a matter  
Through many a silent age,  
Before such power can shatter  
Time-hallowed custom's cage.  
The soul-fruit of the peasant,  
Though seldom seed was sown,  
It is our honor present,-  
Our future sure foreknown.

The fjords that earnest waited  
'Mid mountain-snows around  
His childhood's thoughts created  
And depth of life profound.  
The highlands' sun that played there  
On fjord and mountain snow  
So wide a vision made there  
As one could wish to know.

When  
he  
to Ting repairing  
Would plead the peasant's right,  
Each word a beam was bearing.  
To make our young day bright.  
It came like ancient story  
Or long-lost song's refrain;  
What crowned our past with glory  
It made our present gain.

Though in his boat a seaman,  
A farmer in his field,  
Ne'er finer thoughts did freeman  
In royal council wield.  
His years bear witness ready  
That we shall yet achieve  
Our people's self-rule steady,  
He taught us to believe.

When weary, worn, and aged,  
His faith was ever strong;  
The people's war he waged  
For victory erelong.  
Beneath the banner dying,  
He would not yet give o'er,  
And him Valkyries flying  
Home to Valhalla bore.

From wintry night and bitter  
He was with stately tread  
In Saga's hall a-glitter  
Before the high-sear led.  
Old heroes proud or merry

Rising to greet him went,  
But first of all King Sverre,  
From whom was his descent.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **On a wife's death**

With death's dark eye acquainted she had been made ere this,  
When to her son, her first-born, she gave the farewell kiss,  
And when afar she hastened beside her mother's bed,  
It followed all her faring with warning fraught and dread;  
It filled her with foreboding when standing by the bier:  
More sheaves to gather hopeth the harvester austere.  
So soon she saw her husband, that man of strength, succumb,  
She said with sorrow stricken: « I knew that it would come!»  
She thought that he was chosen by God from earth to go,  
Would check, her hands upthrusting, the harsh behest of woe;  
And with her slender body, too weak for such a strife,  
Would ward her gallant consort,-and gave for him her life.

She smiled, serene and blissful, as death's dark eye she braved;  
Her sacrifice was given, her heart's proud hero saved.  
Our love and admiration lifted a starry dome  
Of happiness above her in life's last hour of gloam,  
And snow-white pure she passed then to her eternal home.  
Such tender love and holy to heaven's bounds can bear  
The souls that it embraces in sacrifice and prayer.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Open water!**

Open water, open water!  
All the weary winter's yearning  
Bursts in restless passion burning.  
Scarce is seen the blue of ocean,  
And the hours seem months in motion.

Open water, open water!  
Smiles the sun on ice defiant,  
Eats it like a shameless giant:  
Soon as mouth of sun forsakes it,  
Swift the freezing night remakes it.

Open water, open water!  
Storm shall be the overcomer  
Sweeping on from others' summer  
Billows free all foes to swallow,-  
Crash and fall and sinking follow.

Open water, open water!  
Mirrored mountains are appearing,  
Boats with steam and sail are nearing,  
Inward come the wide world's surges,  
Outward joy of combat urges.

Open water, open water!  
Fiery sun and cooling shower  
Quicken earth to speak with power.  
Soul responds, the wonder viewing:  
Strength is here for life's renewing.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Our Country 1859

A land there is, lying near far-northern snow,  
Where only the fissures life's springtime may know.  
But surging, the sea tells of great deeds done,  
And loved is the land as a mother by son.

What time we were little and sat on her knee,  
She gave us her saga with pictures to see.  
We read till our eyes opened wide and moist,  
While nodding and smiling she mute rejoiced.

We went to the fjord and in wonder beheld  
The ashen-gray bauta, that record of eld;  
Still older she stood and her silence kept,  
While stone-studded hows all around us slept.

Our hands she then took and away o'er the hill  
She led to the church ever lowly and still,  
Where humbly our forefathers knelt to pray,  
And mildly she taught us: "Do ye as they!"

She scattered her snow on the mountain's steep side,  
Then bade on swift skis her young manhood to glide;  
The North Sea she maddened with scourge of gales,  
Then bade her young manhood to hoist the sails.

Of beautiful maidens she gathered a throng,  
To follow our daring with smiles and with song,  
While she sat enthroned with her saga's scroll  
In mantle of moonlight beneath the Pole.

Then "Forward, go forward!" was borne on the wind,  
"With forefathers' aim and with forefathers' mind,  
For freedom, for Norsehood, for Norway, hurrah!"  
While echoing mountains voiced their hurrah.

Then life-giving fountains burst forth on our sight,  
Then we were baptized with her spirit of might,  
Then gleamed o'er the mountains a vision high,  
That summons us onward until we die.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Our forefathers**

High memories with power  
Shine through the wintry North  
On every peak's white tower,  
On Kattegat so swarth.  
All is so still and spacious,  
The Northern Lights flow free,  
Creating bright and gracious  
A day of memory.

Each deed the North defending,  
Each thought for greater might,  
A star-like word is sending  
Down through the frosty night!  
To hope they call and boldness,  
And call with double cheer  
To him, defying coldness,  
On guard the Eider near.

No anxious shadows clouding,  
No languid, lukewarm mist  
Our heaven of mem'ries shrouding,  
This eve of battle-tryst!  
May, as of yore, while ringing  
The bells unseen loud swelled,  
Come leaders vict'ry bringing,  
Whom th' army ne'er beheld.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Our language

Thou, who sailest Norse mountain-air,  
And Denmark's songs by the cradle singest,  
Who badest in Hald the war-flames flare,  
And, heard in our children's joy, gently ringest,-  
Thou treasure of treasures,  
Our mother-tongue,  
In pains as in pleasures  
Our home and our tower,  
With God our power,-  
We hallow thee!

Whispering secrets that Holberg stored,  
Thou borest him home to a brighter morning,  
Didst serve him with armor and whet his sword  
For satire's assaults and for laughter's warning.  
Thou spirit all knowing,  
Our mother-tongue,  
The ages foregoing,  
The future now growing,  
The present glowing,-  
We hallow thee!

Kierkegaard thou to the deeps didst bring,  
Where life's full currents in God he sounded.  
For Wergeland wert thou the eagle's wing,  
That lifted him sunward to heights unbounded.  
Thou treasure of treasures,  
Our mother-tongue,  
In pain as in pleasures  
Our home and our tower,  
With God our power,-  
We hallow thee!

Radiant warmth of a May-day  
Thou to the spring of our freedom gavest.  
In thy clearness our Norse flags aye  
With song and honor afar thou wavest.  
Thou spirit all knowing,  
Our mother-tongue,  
The ages foregoing,  
The future now growing,  
The present glowing,-  
We hallow thee!

O'er the ocean unrollest thou  
Thy carpet of flowers, a bridge that nigher  
Can bring dear friends to meet even now,-  
While faith grows greater and heaven higher.  
Thou treasure of treasures,  
Our mother-tongue,  
In pain as in pleasures  
Our home and our tower,

With God our power,-  
We hallow thee!

Best of friends that I found wert thou;  
Thou waitedst for me in the eyes of mother.  
And leave me last of them all wilt thou,  
Who knewest me better than any other.  
Thou spirit all knowing,  
Our mother-tongue,  
The ages foregoing,  
The future now growing,  
The present glowing,-  
We hallow thee!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Over The Lofty Mountains

Wonder I must, what I once may see  
Over the lofty mountains!  
Eyes shall meet only snow, may be;  
Standing here, each evergreen tree  
Over the heights is yearning;--  
Will it be long in learning?

Pinions strong bear the eagle away  
Over the lofty mountains  
Forth to the young and vigorous day;  
There he exults in the swift, wild play,  
Rests where his spirit orders,--  
Sees all the wide world's borders.

Full-leaved the apple-tree wishes naught  
Over the lofty mountains!  
Spreading, when summer hither is brought,  
Waiting till next time in its thought;  
Many a bird it is swinging,  
Knowing not what they are singing.

He who has longed for twenty years  
Over the lofty mountains,  
He who knows that he never nears,  
Smaller feels with the lapsing years,  
Heeds what the bird is singing  
Cheerily to its swinging.

Garrulous bird, what will you here  
Over the lofty mountains?  
Surely your nest was there less drear,  
Taller the trees, the outlook clear;--  
Will you then only bring me  
Longings, but naught to wing me?

Shall I then never, never go  
Over the lofty mountains?  
Shall to my thoughts this wall say,--No!  
Stand with terror of ice and snow,  
Barring the way unwended,  
Coffin me when life is ended?

Out will I! Out!--Oh, so far, far, far,  
Over the lofty mountains!  
Here is this cramping, confining bar,  
Baffling my thoughts, that so buoyant are;--  
Lord! Let me try the scaling,  
Suffer no final failing!

Sometime I know I shall rise and soar  
Over the lofty mountains.  
Hast Thou already ajar Thy door?--

Good is Thy home! Yet, Lord, I implore,  
Hold not the gates asunder,--  
Leave me my longing wonder!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Oyvind's Song

Lift thy head, thou undaunted youth!  
Though some hope may now break, forsooth,  
Brighter a new one and higher  
Shall throe eye fill with its fire.

Lift thy head to the vision clear!  
Something near thee is calling: "Here!"--  
Something with myriad voicing,  
Ever in courage rejoicing.

Lift thy head, for an azure height  
Rears within thee a vault of light;  
Music of harps there is ringing,  
Jubilant, rapturous singing.

Lift thy head and thy longing sing!  
None shall conquer the growing spring;  
Where there is life-making power,  
Time shall set free the flower.

Lift thy head and thyself baptize  
In the hopes that radiant rise,  
Heaven to earth foreshowing,  
And in each life-spark glowing!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **P. a. munch**

Many forms belong to greatness.  
He who now has left us bore it  
As a doubt that made him sleepless,  
But at last gave revelation,-  
As a sight-enhancing power,  
That gave visions joined with anguish  
Over all beyond our seeing,-  
As a flight on labor's pinions  
From the thought unto the certain,  
Thence aloft to intuition,-  
Restless haste and changeable ardor,  
God-inspired and unceasing,  
Through the wide world ever storming,  
Took its load of thoughts and doubtings,  
Bore them, threw them off,-and took them,  
Never tired, never listless.

Still! for he had one haven of rest:  
Family-life peace-bestowing!  
Powers of light gave repose to his breast,  
Calm 'mid the strife of his knowing.

Softly with music his wife led him in  
Unto the sweet-smelling birches!  
Unto the flowers and still deeper in  
Under the fir-forest's churches!

Daughters drew near him in love secure  
Cooling his forehead's hot fever;  
Gently their message of innocence pure  
Made him a childlike believer.

Or he joined glad in their light-hearted game,  
Colors and music surrounding,-  
Gone were the clouds, in the heavens came  
Sparkling of star-light abounding.

But as in an autumn evening  
Silent, dreamy, dark, sheet-lightning  
Wakens thought and feeling stormward,-  
Or as in a boat a sudden  
Stroke when gliding as in slumber  
On between the cliffs that tower  
In a quiet, balmy spring night,-  
But a single stroke and soft, then  
Echo takes it up and tosses  
To and fro 'mid walls of mountains,  
Thrush and grouse send forth their wood-calls  
Deer rise up and listen keenly,  
Stones are rolling, all are up now,  
Dogs are barking, bells are clanging,  
Ushering in the strife of daytime,-

Thus could oft a recollection  
Down-light falling in that playtime,  
Waken all his thought and doubting!

Then it roved the wide world over,  
Then it hottest burned within him,-  
But it lavished light for others!

Rise of races, spread of language,  
Birth of names, all laws' close kinship,  
Small and great in equal passion,  
Equal haste and doubting goal-ward!-  
There where others stones saw only,  
He saw precious gems that glistened,  
Sunk his shaft the mine to deepen.  
And where others thought the treasure  
Sure and safe for years a hundred,  
Doubt possessed him as he burrowed  
Day and night - and saw it vanish!  
But the unrest that gave power  
Made him oft the goal pass over;  
While to others he gave clearness,  
Intuitions new deceived him.  
Therefore: where he once had striven,  
Thither he would turn him never,  
Changed his ground and shifted labor,  
From his own thought-conquests fleeing.  
But his thoughts pursued, untiring,  
Followed, growing, as the fire,  
Kindled in Brazilian forests,  
Storm-wind makes and storm-wind follows!  
Where before no foot had trodden,  
Ways were burned for many millions!

Northward stretches Scandinavia  
'Mid the fog that dims the Ice-sea,  
Darkness of the months of winter  
Lays its weight on sea and mountain.  
Like our lands are too our peoples.  
Their beginnings prehistoric  
Stretch afar in fog and darkness.  
But as through the fog a lighthouse,  
Or as Northern Lights o'er darkness,  
Gleamed his thought with light and guidance.  
When with filial fond remembrance  
Tenderly he sought and questioned,  
Searching for his people's pathways-  
Names and graves and rusty weapons,  
Stones and tools their answer gave him.  
Through primeval Asian forests,  
Over steppes and sands of deserts,  
'Neath a thousand years that moldered,

Saw he caravan-made footsteps  
Seek a new home in the Northland.  
And as they the rivers followed,  
Followed them his thought abundant,  
Into Nature's All full-flowing.-

See his restless soul's creation!  
Harmony of truth he yearned for,  
Found it not, but wonder-working  
New discoveries and pathways,  
-Like those alchemists aforetime  
Who, though gold was all their seeking,  
Found not that, but mighty forces,  
Which to-day the world are moving.-

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Deepest ground of all his being  
Was the polar power of contrast,  
For his thought, to music wakened  
By the touch of  
Northern Saga

Vibrated melodious longing,  
Toward the  
South  
forever tending.  
In his eye the lambent fire,  
Of his thought the glint, showed kinship  
With the free improvisator  
In the land of warmth and vineyards.  
And his swiftly changing feeling  
And his all-consuming ardor,  
That could toil the livelong winter  
Till caprice the fruit discarded,-  
That immeasurable richness  
Wherein thoughts and moods and music,  
Joy and sorrow, jest and earnest,  
Gleamed and played without cessation,-  
All a Southern day resembled!

Therefore was his life a journey,  
Towards the South in constant movement,-  
Through the mists of intuition,  
From the darker to the brighter,  
From the colder to the warmer,-  
On the bridge of ceaseless labor  
Bearing over sea and mountain!

Oh, the time with wife beside him  
And his bonny playmate-sisters  
(Gladsome children, winsome daughters),

When he stood, where evening sunshine  
Glowed on Capitol and Forum,-  
Stood where from the great world-city,  
As from history's very fountain,  
Knowledge wells in streams of fullness;-  
Where a clearness large and cloudless  
Falls upon the bygone ages  
That have laid them down to rest here;-  
Where to him, the Northern searcher,  
It would seem, he had been straying  
Too long lost in history's fogland,  
Rowing round the deep fjords' surface;-  
Stood where dead men burst the earth-clods  
And themselves come forth for witness  
In their heavy marble togas;-  
Where the goddesses of Delos  
In the frescoed halls are dancing,  
As two thousand years before now;-  
Pantheon and Coliseum  
In their spacious fate have sheltered  
All the world's swift evolution;-  
Where a Hermes from that corner  
Saw the footsteps firm of Cato,  
Pontifex in the procession,-  
Saw then Nero as Apollo  
Lifted up take sacrifices,  
Saw then Gregory, the wrathful,  
Riding forth to rule in spirit  
Over all the known world's kingdoms,-  
Saw then Cola di Rienzi

Homage pay to freedom's goddess  
'Mid the Roman people's paeans,-  
Saw Pope Leo and his princes  
Choose instead of the Lord Jesus  
Aristotle dead and Plato;-  
Saw again how stouter epochs  
Raised the Church of Papal power,  
Till the Frenchman overthrew it  
And exalted Nature's Godhead;  
Saw anew then wonted custom  
In its pious, still processions  
With a Lamb the great world's ruler!-  
All this saw the little Hermes  
On the corner near the temple,  
And the wise man from the Northland  
Saw that Hermes and his visions.

Yes, when over Rome he stood there  
In that high, historic clearness,  
And his eye the mountain-ridges  
Followed toward the red of evening,-

Then all beams of longing focused  
In a blessed intuition,  
And - he saw a church before him  
Greater far than that of nature,  
And he felt a peace descending,  
Larger far than all the present.

When the second time he came there,  
After days and nights of labor,  
Hard as were it for redemption,-  
Then the Lord Himself gave welcome,  
Led him gently thither, saying:  
'Peace be with thee! Thou hast conquered!'

But to us with sorrow stricken  
Turned the Lord with comfort, saying:  
'When  
I  
call, who then dares murmur,  
That the called man had not finished?'

Whoso dies, he here had finished!  
Spite our sorrow we believe it,  
Hold that He, who unrest giveth  
(The discoverer's disquiet,  
That drove Newton, drove Columbus),  
Also knows when rest is needed.

But we question, while reviewing  
All that mighty thought-armada  
Now disbanded, home-returning:  
Who again shall reunite it?

For when  
he  
cut his war-arrow,  
Lords and liegemen soon were mustered,  
And to aid from Sweden, Denmark,  
England, France, swift-flying vessels  
Coursed the sea-ways toward his standard.

Royal was that fleet and mighty,  
By our shore at anchor lying;  
We were wont to see it near us  
Or to hear the wondrous tidings  
Of its cruises and its conquests.

What it won we own forever;  
But the fleet is sailing homeward.  
Here we stand the last sail watching  
As it sinks on the horizon.  
Then we turn and breathe the question:

Who again shall reunite it?

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Per bo**

Once I knew a noble peasant  
From a line of men large-hearted.  
Light and strength were in his mind,  
Lifted like a peak clear-lined  
O'er the valley in spring sunshine,  
First to feel the morning's beam,  
First refreshed by cloud-born stream.

Wide the springtime spread its banner,  
Waving in his will illumined,  
Bright with promise, color-sound;  
Heritage of toil its ground.  
Round that mountain music floated,  
Songsters sweet of faith and hope  
Nestled on its tree-clad slope.

Sometime, sometime all the valley  
Like him shall with light be flooded;  
Sometime all his faith and truth  
Sunward grow in dewy youth,  
And the dreams he dreamt too early  
Live and make him leader be  
For a race as true as he.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Post festum

A man in coat of ice arrayed  
Stood up once by the Arctic Ocean;  
The whole earth shook with proud emotion  
And honor to the giant paid.

A king came, to him climbing up,  
An Order in his one hand bearing:  
'Who great become, this sign are wearing.'  
-The growling giant said but 'Stop!'

The frightened king fell down again,  
Began to weep with features ashen:  
'My Order is in this rude fashion  
Refused by just the greatest men.

'My dear man, take it, 't is but fit,  
Of your king's honor be the warder;  
On your breast greater grows the Order,  
And we who bear it, too, by it.'-

The Arctic giant was too good,-  
A foible oft ascribed to giants,  
Who foolish trust in little clients,-  
He took it,-while we mocking stood.

But all the kings crept to him then,  
And each his Order brought, to know it  
Thereby renewed and greater, so it  
Gave rank to needy noblemen.

Honi soit  
... and all the rest;  
Soon Orders covered all his breast.  
But oh! they greater grew no tittle,  
And he grew so confounded little.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Psalms**

I  
I seem to be  
Sundered from Thee,  
Thou Harmony of all creation.  
Am I disowned  
For talents loaned  
And useless hid in vain probation?  
Now powerless,  
In weariness,  
Now in despair a beggar humble  
For help, for cheer,  
A voice, an ear,  
To hear and guide, while on I stumble.  
God, let me be.  
Of use to Thee!  
If vain my purpose and my powers,  
Then sinks from sight  
My star,-and night  
Henceforth my steps enfolding lowers.  
Then break and bind  
My ravaged mind  
The terrors dread of doubt and anguish.  
I know the pack,  
I drove them back;-  
Only to-day does courage languish.  
Oh, come now, peace!  
Come faith's increase,  
That life's strong chain shall ever bind me!  
That not in vain  
I strive and strain  
Myself to seek until I find me!

II  
Honor the springtide life ever adorning,  
That all things has made!  
Things smallest have some resurrectional morning,  
The forms alone fade.  
Life begets life,  
Potencies higher surprise.  
Kind begets kind,  
Heedless of time as it flies.  
Worlds pass away and arise.

Nothing so small but there's something still smaller,  
No one can see.  
Nothing so great but there's something still greater  
Beyond it can be.  
Worms in the earth-  
Mountains to make they essay.  
Dust without worth,  
Sands with which sea-billows play,-

Founders of kingdoms were they.

Infinite all, where the smallest and greatest  
Oneness unfold.  
No one has seen what was first,-and the latest  
None shall behold.  
Laws underlie,  
Order the all they maintain.  
Need and supply  
Bring one another; our bane  
Boots to the general gain.

Eternity's offspring and germ are we all now.  
Thoughts have their true  
Roots in our race's first morning; they fall now,  
Query and clue,  
Freighted with seed  
Into eternity's soil;  
Joy be your meed,  
That your brief life's fleeting toil  
Fruit for eternity bears.

Join in the joy of all life, every being,  
Brief bloom of its spring!  
Honor th' eternal, our human lot freeing  
From fetters that cling!  
Adding your mite,  
With the eternal unite!  
Though you decay,  
Breathe as a moment you may,  
Air of eternity's day!

III

CHORUS

Who art  
Thou  
, whom a thousand names trace  
Through all times that are gone and each tongue?  
Thou wert infinite yearning's embrace,  
Thou wert hope when the yoke heavy hung,  
Thou wert darkening death-terror's guest,  
Thou wert sun that with life-gladness blessed.  
Still Thine image we changefully fashion,  
And each form we would call revelation;  
Each man holds his for true with deep passion,-  
Till it crumbles in poignant negation.

SOLO

Who Thou art, none can tell.  
But I know Thou dost dwell  
As the limitless search in my soul-it is Thou!-  
After justice and light,  
After victory's right  
For the new that's revealed, it is Thou, it is Thou!  
Every law that we see  
Or believe there may be,  
Though we never can knowledge attain, it is Thou!-  
As my armor and aid  
Round my life they are laid,  
And with joy I avow, it is Thou, it is Thou!

#### CHORUS

Since we never Thine essence can know,  
We have thought mediators of Thee;-  
But the ages their impotence show,  
We stand still, while no way we can see.  
If in sickness for succor we thirst,  
Is there balm in the dreams that have burst?  
Stars of hope and of longing eternal,  
That we saw o'er life's sorrows arisen,  
Shall they sink in death's terrors nocturnal,  
Only turn into worms in our prison?

#### SOLO

He that liveth in me,  
Needeth no one to be  
Mediator; I own Him indeed: it is Thou!  
Is eternal hope prized  
As from Him; is baptized  
By His spirit my own,-is it Thou, is it Thou -:  
Shall not I, who am dust,  
His eternity trust?  
I take humbly my law; for I know, it is Thou!  
Was I worth Thy word: Live!  
Let Thy life power give,  
When Thou wilt, as Thou wilt,-it is Thou, it is Thou!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Question and answer

THE CHILD

Father! Within the forest's bound  
No bird I found,  
No sound of song the woods around.

THE FATHER

The bird that glad his song us gave,  
Flies o'er the wave;  
Perhaps he there will find his grave.

THE CHILD

But why does he not wait till later?

THE FATHER

He goes where light and warmth are greater

THE CHILD

Father! It selfish seems to me,  
Far off to flee,  
When all we others here must be.

THE FATHER

With new-born spring comes new-born song;  
By instinct strong  
The better new he'll bring ere long.

THE CHILD

But if in death the cold waves swallow-?

THE FATHER

Others will come; his kin will follow.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Rallying song for freedom in the north to**

Dishonored by the higher, but loved by all the low,-  
Say, is it not the pathway that the new has to go?  
By those who ought to guard it betrayed, oh yes, betrayed,-  
Say, is it not thus truth ever progress has made?

Some summer day beginning, a murmur in the grain,  
It grows to be a roaring through the forests amain,  
Until the sea shall bear it with thunder-trumpets' tone,  
Where nothing, nothing's heard but it alone, it alone.

With Northern allies warring we take the Northern  
For God and for our freedom-is the watchword we bring.  
That God, who gave us country and language, and all,  
We find Him in our doing, if we hear and heed His call.

That doing we will forward, we many, although weak,  
'Gainst all in fearless fighting, who the truth will not seek:-  
Some summer day beginning, a murmur in the grain,  
It goes now as a roaring through the forests amain.

'T will grow to be a storm ere men think that this can be,  
With voice of thunder sweeping o'er the infinite sea.  
What nation God's call follows, earth's greatest power shall show,  
And carry all before it, though it high stand or low.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Romsdal

Come up on deck! The morning is clear,-  
Memory wakes, as the landmarks appear.  
How many the islands, green and cheery,  
The salt-licking skerries, weed-wound, smeary!  
On this side, on that side, they frolic before us,  
Good friends, but wild,-in frightened chorus  
Sea-fowl shriek round us, a flying legion.  
We are in a region  
Of storms historic, unique for aye.

We fare the fishermen's venturesome way!  
Far out the bank and the big fish shoaling,  
The captain narrates; and just now unrolling  
Sails run to shore a swift racing match;-  
Good is the catch.

Yes, yes,-I recognize them again,  
Romsdal's boats' weather-beaten men.  
They  
know  
how to sail, when need's at hand.

But I'm forgetting to look towards land!  
- - - It whelms the sight  
Like lightning bright,-  
In memory graven, but not so great.

Wherever I suffer my eyes to wander,  
Stand mountain-giants, both here and yonder,  
The loin of one by the other's shoulder,  
Naught else to where earth and sky are blending.  
The dread of a world's din daunts the beholder;  
The silence vastens the vision unending.

Some are in white and others in blue,  
With pointed tops that emulous tower;  
Some mass their power,  
In marching columns their purpose pursue.  
Away, you small folk!-In there 'The Preacher'  
In high assembly the service intoning  
Of magnates primeval, their patriarch owning!  
Of what does he preach, my childhood's teacher?  
So often, so often to him I listened,  
In eager worship, devout and lowly;  
My songs were christened  
In light that fell from his whiteness holy.

- How great it is! I can finish never.  
Great thoughts that in life and legend we treasure  
Stream towards the scene in persistent endeavor,  
The mighty impression to grasp and measure,-  
Dame's hell, India's myth-panorama,

Shakespeare's earth-overarching drama,  
Aeschylus' thunders that purge and free,  
Beethoven's powerful symphony,-  
They widen and heighten, they cloud and brighten  
-Like small ants scrambling and soft-cooing doves,  
They tumble backward and flee affrighted;-  
As if a dandy in dress-coat and gloves  
The mountains approached and to dance invited.  
No, tempt them not! Their retainer be!  
You'll learn then later,  
How life with the great must make you greater.

If you are humble, they'll say it themselves,  
That something is greater than e'en their greatest.  
Look how the little river that delves  
High in the notch within limits straitest,  
Through ice first burrowed and stone, a brook,  
Slowly the giants asunder wearing!  
Unmoved before, their face now and bearing  
They had to change 'mid the spring-flood's laughter;  
Millions of years have followed thereafter,  
Millions of years it also took.  
In stamps the fjord now to look on their party,  
Lifts his sou'-wester, gives greeting to them.  
Whoever at times in their fog could view them  
Has seen him near to their very noses;-  
The fjord's not famed for his well-bred poses.

Towards him hurry, all white-foam-faced,  
Brooks and rivers in whirling haste,  
All of his family, frolicsome, naughty.  
If ever the mountains the fjord would immure,  
Their narrows press nigher, a prison sure;-  
His water-hands then with a gesture haughty  
Seize the whole saucy pass like a shell;  
Set to his mouth, he begins to blow it  
With western-gale-lungs,-and then you may know it,  
Loud is the noise, and the swift currents swell.

Forcing the coast, a big fjord, black and gray,  
Breaks us our way;  
Waterfalls rushing on both sides rumble.  
Sponge-wet and slow,  
Cloud-masses over the mountain-flanks fumble;  
The sun and mist, lo,  
Symbol of struggle eternal show.

This is my Romsdal's unruly land!  
Home-love rejoices.

All things I see, have eyes and have voices.  
The people? I know them, each man understand,

Though never I saw him nor with him have spoken;  
I know this folk, for the fjord is their token.

One  
is the fjord in the storm's battle-fray,

Another  
is he when the sunbeams play  
In midsummer's splendor,  
And radiant, happy his heart is tender.  
Whatever has form,  
He bears on his breast with affection warm,  
Mirrors it, fondles it,-  
Be it so bare as the mossy gray rubble,  
Be it so brief as a brook's fleeting bubble.

Oh, what a brightness! Beauty, soul-ravishing,  
Shines from his prayer, that now he be shriven  
Of all the past! And penitence lavishing,  
All he confesses; with glad homage given  
Mirrors and masses  
Deep the mountains' high peaks and passes.

The old giants think now: He's not really bad;  
In greater degree he's wrathful and glad  
Than others perchance; is false not at all,  
But reckless, capricious,-true son of Romsdal.

Right are the mountains! This race-type keeping,

They  
saw men creeping  
Over the ridges, scant fodder reaping.

They  
saw men eager  
Toil on the sea, though their take was meager,  
Plow the steep slope and trench the bog-valley,  
To bouts with the rock the brown nag rally.  
Saw their faults flaunted,-  
Buck-like they bicker,  
Love well their liquor,-  
But know not defeat,-hoist the sail undaunted!

Different the districts; but all in all:  
Spirits vivacious, with longings that spur them,  
Depths full of song, with billows that stir them,  
Folk of the fjord and the sudden squall.

Viking-abode, I hail you with wonder!  
High-built the wall, broad sea-floor thereunder,

Hall lit by sun-bows on waterfall vapors,  
Hangings of green,-your dwellers the drapers.  
Viking-born race,-'t is you I exalt!

It costs in under so high a vault  
A struggle long unto lordship stable;  
Not all who have tried to succeed, were able.  
It costs to recover the wealth of the fjord  
From wanton waste and in power to hoard.  
It costs;-but who conquers is made a man.  
I know there are that can.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Secret love

He gloomily sat by the wall,  
As gaily she danced with them all.  
Her laughter's light spell  
On every one fell;  
His heartstrings were near unto rending,  
But this there was none comprehending.

She fled from the house, when at eve  
He came there to take his last leave.  
To hide her she crept,  
She wept and she wept;  
Her life-hope was shattered past mending,  
But this there was none comprehending.

Long years dragged but heavily o'er,  
And then he came back there once more.  
-Her lot was the best,  
In peace and at rest;  
Her thought was of him at life's ending,  
But this there was none comprehending.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Sin, death**

Sin and Death, those sisters two,  
Two, two,  
Sat together while dawned the morning.  
Sister, marry! Your house will do,  
Do, do,  
For me, too, was Death's warning.

Sin was wedded, and Death was pleased,  
Pleased, pleased,  
Danced about them the day they married;  
Night came on, she the bridegroom seized,  
Seized, seized,  
And away with her carried.

Sin soon wakened alone to weep,  
Weep, weep.  
Death sat near in the dawn of morning:  
Him you love, I love too and keep,  
Keep, keep.  
He is here, was Death's warning.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Song

Song brings us light with the power of lending  
Glory to brighten the work that we find;  
Song brings us warmth with the power of rending  
Rigor and frost in the swift-melting mind.  
Song is eternal with power of blending  
Time that is gone and to come in the soul,  
Fills it with yearnings that flow without ending,  
Seeking that sea where the light-surges roll.

Song brings us union, while gently beguiling  
Discord and doubt on its radiant way;  
Song brings us union and leads, reconciling  
Battle-glad passions by harmony's sway,  
Unto the beautiful, valiant, and holy  
-Some can pass over its long bridge of light  
Higher and higher to visions that solely  
Faith can reveal to the spirit's pure sight.

Songs from the past of the past's longings telling,  
Pensive and sad cast a sunset's red glow;  
Present time's longings in sweet music dwelling,  
Grateful the soul of the future shall know.  
Youth of all ages in song here are meeting,  
Sounding in tone and in word their desire;  
-More than we think, from the dead bringing greeting,  
Gather to-night in our festival choir.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Song for norway national hymn

Yes, we love this land that towers  
Where the ocean foams;  
Rugged, storm-swept, it embowers  
Many thousand homes.  
Love it, love it, of you thinking,  
Father; mother dear,  
And that night of saga sinking  
Dreamful to us here.

This the land that Harald guarded  
With his hero-throng,  
This the land that Haakon warded,  
Hailed by Eyvind's song.  
Olaf here the cross erected,  
While his blood he shed;  
Sverre's word this land protected  
'Gainst the Roman dread.

Peasants whetted axes carried,  
Broke th' invader's blow;  
Tordenskjold flashed forth and harried,  
Lighted home the foe.  
Women oft to arms were leaping,  
Manlike in their deed;  
Others' lot was naught but weeping,  
Tears that brought their meed.

Many truly were we never,  
But we did suffice,  
When in times of testing ever  
Worthy was the prize.  
For we would the land see burning,  
Rather than its fall;  
Memory our thoughts is turning  
Down to Fredrikshald!

Harder times we bore that tried us  
Were cast off in scorn;  
In that crisis was beside us  
Blue-eyed freedom born.  
That gave father-strength for bearing  
Famine-need and sword,  
Honor death itself outwearing,  
And it gave accord.

Far our foe his weapons flinging  
Up his visor raised;  
We in wonder to him springing  
On our brother gazed.  
Both by wholesome shame incited  
Southward made our way;

Brothers three  
, in heart united,  
We shall stand for aye!

Men of Norway, high or lowly,  
Give to God the praise!  
He our land's Defender Holy  
In its darkest days!  
All our fathers here have striven  
And our mothers wept,  
Hath the Lord His guidance given,  
So our right we kept.

Yes, we love this land that towers  
Where the ocean foams;  
Rugged, storm-swept, it embowers  
Many thousand homes.  
As our fathers' conflict gave it  
Vict'ry at the end,  
Also we, when time shall crave it,  
Will its peace defend.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Song for the students' glee club**

Now, brothers, sing out our song,  
Whose train of light shall follow long!  
With love are its measures beating  
And victory's joyous greeting,  
While round about it flower-seeds  
In will of youth shall grow to deeds!

Our song has gone far and wide,  
Bright mem'ries on our way abide,  
In flags flying, friends that love us,  
In wreaths from fair hands above us,  
In feasts where youth's full spirits stream,  
Our nation's past, our nation's dream.

At  
Hald  
on a sunny day  
That shot-torn flag of many a fray  
Was waving above our singing,  
Soul-fire to our music bringing,  
The ardor of that glorious band,  
Who died as heroes for our land.

To  
Arendal  
our summer-way  
'For might and fame!'-remember aye!  
The fleet on the bay was riding,  
Our singer-ship through it gliding.  
Our merchant-ships shall rule the wave!  
This joyous hoisting-song we gave.

We gathered in  
Bergen  
town  
Of ancient and of new renown.  
The horns of our fathers greet us,  
King Sverre comes forth to meet us;  
But fresh and full the present spoke  
In heartfelt song from all its folk.

Upsala, Copenhagen, Lund,

In each our song its garland won,  
Fair fetters of music winding,  
Harmonious the Northland binding;  
Our mighty choral theme shall be

The Northern races' unity.

With courage, then, onward roam!  
Where echo answers is our home.  
Our past that we sing draws nearer,  
Our future in song grows clearer,  
E'en while we wander hand in hand  
And summer sing into our land.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Song of freedom to

Freedom's father-power strong,  
Freedom's mother-wrath and song.  
Giant-stout, a youth self-taught,  
Soon a giant's work he wrought.  
Ever he, full of glee,  
Thought and wit and melody,  
Mighty, merry, made his way,-  
Labor's toil or battle-fray.

Enemies whom none could tell  
Lay in wait this foe to fell,  
Found him waking all too stark,  
Sought his sleeping hours to mark,  
Tried their skill, bound him still;  
When he wakened, they fared ill.  
Glad he forward strode firm-paced,  
Full of power, full of haste.

Bare fields blossom 'neath his feet,  
Commerce swells about his seat,  
From his fire gleam thought-rays bright,-  
All things doubled are in might!  
For the land law he planned,  
Keeps it, guards with head and hand,  
Of all rue and error quit,  
Crushing him who injures it.

Freedom's God is God of light,  
Not the bondsman's god of fright,-  
God of love and brotherhood,  
Springtime's hope and will for good.  
To earth's ends  
peace  
He sends!  
Heed the words His law commends:  
'One your Lord, and I am He,  
Have no other gods but Me!'

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Sung for norway's riflemen**

Fly the banner, fly the banner!  
For our freedom fight!  
'Neath the banner, 'neath the banner,  
Riflemen unite!  
Graybeard in the Storting  
Gives his vote for right and truth,  
Rifle-voice supporting  
Of our armed youth.  
Music runeful  
Ring out tuneful  
Bullets sent point-blank,  
Fiery coursing,  
Freedom forcing  
Way to royal rank;  
They from silent valleys  
To the Storting's rallies  
Bring the clear 'Rah! Rah!'  
And there clamors o'er us  
Loud the rifle chorus,  
Piercing and repeated: 'Rah! Rah!  
Rah-rah, rah-rah, rah-rah, rah-rah.'

As the lingering echo rattles,  
Listens sure our Mother Norway,  
That her sons can go the war-way,  
Fight her freedom's future battles.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Synnove's Song

Have thanks for all from our childhood's day,  
Our play together in woodland roaming.  
I thought that play would go on for aye,  
Though life should pass to its gloaming.

I thought that play would go on for aye,  
From bowers leading of leafy birches  
To where the Solbakke houses lay,  
And where the red-painted church is.

I sat and waited through evenings long  
And scanned the ridge with the spruces yonder;  
But darkening mountains made shadows throng,  
And you the way did not wander.

I sat and waited with scarce a doubt:  
He'll dare the way when the sun's descended.  
The light shone fainter, was nearly out,  
The day in darkness had ended.

My weary eye is so wont to gaze,  
To turn its look it is slow in learning;  
No other landmark it seeks, nor strays,  
Beneath the brow sorely burning.

They name a place where I help may find,  
And fain to Fagerli church would guide me;  
But try not thither to move my mind;  
He sits there ever beside me.

--But good it is, that full well I know,  
Who placed the houses both here and yonder,  
Then cut a way through the woods so low  
And let my eye on it wander.

But good it is that full well I know,  
Who built the church and to pray invited,  
And made them meeting in pairs to go  
Before the altar united.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Taylor's song

For joys the hours of earth bestow  
With sorrow thou must pay.  
Though many follow close, yet know,  
They're loaned but for a day.  
With sighing in thy laughter's stead  
Shall come a time of grief,  
The load of usury bow thy head,  
With loss of thy belief.  
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,  
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,  
Hadst thou not smiled upon me, thou,  
I were not weeping now.

May God help him who never can  
Give only half his soul;  
The time comes surely for that man  
To take the sorrow whole.  
May God help him who was so glad,  
That he cannot forget,  
Help him who lost the all he had,  
But not his reason yet.  
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,  
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,  
The flowers that my life had grown,  
Died out when thou went gone.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The angels of sleep**

Asleep the child fell  
When night cast its spell;  
The angels came near  
With laughter and cheer.  
Her watch at its waking the mother was keeping:  
'How sweet, my dear child, was your smile now while sleeping!'

To God mother went,  
From home it was rent;  
Asleep the child fell  
'Neath tears' troublous spell.  
But soon it heard laughter and mother-words tender;  
The angels brought dreams full of childhood's rare splendor.

It grew with the years,  
Till gone were the tears;  
Asleep the child fell,  
While thoughts cast their spell.  
But faithful the angels their vigils were keeping,  
The thoughts took and whispered: 'Have peace now, while sleeping!'

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The bier of precentor a. reitan**

With smiles his soft eyes ever gleamed,  
When God and country thinking;  
With endless joy, his soul, it seemed,  
Faith, fatherland, was linking.  
His word, his song,  
Like springs flowed strong;  
They fruitful made the valley long,  
And quickened all there drinking.

Poor people and poor homes among  
In wintry region saddest,  
In Sunday's choir he always sung,  
Of all the world the gladdest:  
'The axis stout  
It turns about,  
Falls not the poorest home without,  
For thus, O God, Thou badest.'

With sickness came a heavy year  
And put to proof his singing,  
While helpless children standing near  
His trust to test were bringing.  
But glad the more,  
As soft notes soar  
When winds o'er hidden harp-strings pour,  
His song his soul was winging.

His life foretold us that erelong  
With faith in God unshaken  
Shall all our nation stand in song,  
And church, home, school, awaken,  
In Norway's song,  
In gladness' song,  
In glory of the Lord's own song,  
From life's low squalor taken.

Fair fatherland, do not forget,  
The children of his bower!  
He, poor as is the rosebush, yet  
Gave gladness till death's hour-  
With failure's smart  
Let not depart  
From this thy soil so glad a heart,-  
His garden, let it flower!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The blonde maiden

Though  
she  
depart, a vision flitting,  
If I these thoughts in words exhale:  
I love you, you blonde maiden, sitting  
Within your pure white beauty's veil.  
I love you for your blue eyes dreaming,  
Like moonlight moving over snow,  
And 'mid the far-off forests beaming  
On something hid I may not know.

I love this forehead's fair perfection  
Because it stands so starry-clear,  
In flood of thought sees its reflection  
And wonders at the image near.  
I love these locks in riot risen  
Against the hair-net's busy bands;  
To free them from their pretty prison  
Their sylphs entice my eyes and hands.

I love this figure's supple swinging  
In rhythm of its bridal song,  
Of strength and life-joy daily singing  
With youthful yearnings deep and long.  
I love this foot so lightly bearing  
The glory of sure victory  
Through youth's domain of merry daring  
To meet first-love that hers shall be.

I love these hands, these lips enchanting,  
With them the God of love's allied,  
With them the apple-prize is granting,  
But guards them, too, lest aught betide.  
I love you and must say it ever,  
Although you heed not what you've heard,  
But flee and answer: maidens never  
May put their trust in poet's word.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Call**

Come calf now to mother,  
Come lamb that I choose,  
Come cats, one and t' other,  
With snowy-white shoes,  
Come gosling all yellow,  
Come forth with your fellow,  
Come chickens so small,  
Scarce walking at all,  
Come doves, that are mine now,  
With feathers so fine now!  
The grass is bedewed,  
The sunlight renewed,  
It's early, early, summer's advancing  
But autumn soon comes a-dancing!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The child in our soul**

Toward God in heaven spacious  
With artless faith a boy looks free,  
As toward his mother gracious,  
And top of Christmas-tree.  
But early in the storm of youth  
There wounds him deep the serpent's tooth;  
His childhood's faith is doubted  
And flouted.

Soon stands in radiant splendor  
With bridal wreath his boyhood's dream;  
Her loving eyes and tender  
The light of heaven's faith stream.  
As by his mother's knee of yore  
God's name he stammers yet once more,  
The rue of tears now paying  
And praying.

When now life's conflict stirring  
Leads him along through doubtings wild,  
Then upward points unerring  
Close by his side his child.  
With children he a child is still  
And whatso'er his heart may chill,  
Prayer for his son is warming,  
Transforming.

The greatest man in wonder  
Must ward the child within his breast,  
And list 'mid loudest thunder  
Its whisperings unrepressed.  
Where oft a hero fell with shame,  
The child it was restored his name,  
His better self revealing,  
And healing.

All great things thought created  
In child-like joy sprang forth and grew;  
All strength with goodness mated,  
Obeyed the child's voice true.  
When beauty in the soul held sway,  
The child gave it in artless play;-  
All wisdom worldly-minded  
Is blinded.

Hail him, who forward presses  
So far that he a home is worth  
For there alone possesses  
The child-life peace on earth.  
Though worn we grieve and hardened grow,  
What solace 't is our home to know  
With children's laughter ringing

And singing.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Day Of Sunshine

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I roved to the woods, on my back I lay,  
In cradle of fancy rolled me;  
But there were ants, and gnats that bite,  
The horse-fly was keen, the wasp showed fight.

'Dear me, don't you want to be out in this fine  
weather?' -said mother, who sat on the steps and sang.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
A meadow I found, on my back I lay,  
And sang what my spirit told me;  
Then snakes came crawling, a fathom long,  
To bask in the sun,-I fled with my song.

'In such blessed weather we can go barefoot,'-said mother,  
as she pulled off her stockings.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I loosened a boat, on my back I lay,  
While blithely the current bowled me;  
But hot grew the sun, and peeled my nose;  
Enough was enough, and to land I chose.

'Now these are just the days to make hay in,'- said mother,  
as she stuck the rake in it.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I climbed up a tree, oh, what bliss to play,  
As cooling the breeze consoled me;  
But worms soon fell on my neck, by chance,  
And jumping, I cried: "T is the Devil's own dance!"

'Yes, if the cows aren't sleek and shiny to-day, they'll  
never be so,'-said mother, gazing up the hillside.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,  
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;  
I dashed to the waterfall's endless play,  
There only could peace enfold me.  
The shining sun saw me drown and die,-  
If you made this ditty, 't was surely not I.

'Three more such sunshine-days, and everything will  
be in,'-said mother, and went to make my bed.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Dove**

I saw a dove fear-daunted,  
By howling storm-blast driven;  
Where waves their power vaunted,  
From land it had been riven.  
No cry nor moan it uttered,  
I heard no plaint repeated;  
In vain its pinions fluttered --  
It had to sink, defeated.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The first meeting**

The first fond meeting holy  
Is like the woodbirds' trilling,  
Is like a sea-song thrilling,  
When red the sun sinks slowly,-  
Is like a horn on mountain,  
That wakes time's sleep thereunder  
And summons to life's fountain  
To meet in nature's wonder.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Hare And The Fox**

The fox lay still by the birch-tree's root  
In the heather.  
The hare was running with nimble foot  
O'er the heather.  
Was ever brighter a sunshine-day,  
Before, behind me, and every way,  
O'er the heather!

The fox laughed low by the birch-tree's root  
In the heather.  
The hare was running with daring foot  
O'er the heather.

I am so happy for everything!  
Hallo! Why go you with mighty spring  
O'er the heather?

The fox lay hid by the birch-tree's root  
In the heather.  
The hare dashed to him with reckless foot  
O'er the heather.  
May God have mercy, but this is queer! --  
Good gracious, how dare you dance so here  
O'er the heather?

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The land that shall be (dedicated to herman anker and m. anker on the**

Ocaasion of their silver-wedding, September 15, 1888)

Land that shall be  
Thither, when thwarted our longings, we sail,-  
Sighs to the clouds, that we breathe when we fail,  
Form a mirage of rich valley and mead  
Over our need,-  
Visions revealing the future until  
Faith shall fulfil,-  
The land that shall be.

Land that shall be!  
All of our labor to sow seeds of gain  
Grows in the ages when  
our  
names shall wane,  
Gathered with others', 't is stored in the true  
Will to renew.  
This then shall carry our labor within,  
Safely within  
The land that shall be.

Land that shall be!  
Tears that are shed over evil's foul blight,  
Blood-sweat in conflict to win higher right,  
Hallow the will unto victory's cost.  
Let us be lost,  
Rooting out wrong, that the good we may sow,  
Soon overgrow  
The land that shall be.

Land that shall be!  
Looming in beauty of colors and song,  
Golden in sunlight that glad makes and strong,  
Present in children's eyes, looking to-day  
Down when you pray.  
Winning good victories gives us the power  
To own a brief hour  
The land that shall be.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Maiden On The Shore**

She wandered so young on the shore around,  
Her thoughts were by naught on earth now bound.  
Soon came there a painter, his art he plied  
Above the tide,  
In shadow wide,-  
He painted the shore and herself beside.

More slowly she wandered near him around,  
Her thoughts by a single thing were bound.  
And this was his picture wherein he drew  
Herself so true,  
Herself so true,  
Reflected in ocean with heaven's blue.

All driven and drawn far and wide around  
Her thoughts now by everything were bound.  
Far over the ocean,-and yet most dear  
The shore right here,  
The man so near,  
Did ever the sunshine so bright appear!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Maiden's Song**

Good-morning, sun, 'mid the leaves so green --  
Mind of youth in the dales' deep reaches,  
Smile that brightens their somber speeches,  
Heaven's gold on our earth-dust seen!

Good-morning, sun, o'er the royal tower!  
Kindly thou beckonest forth each maiden;  
Kindle each heart as a star light-laden,  
Twinkling so clear, though a sad night lower!

Good-morning, sun, o'er the mountain-side!  
Light the land that still sleep disguises  
Till it awakens and fresh arises  
For yonder day in thy warmth's full tide!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The meeting

(At The Student Meeting Of 1869)

Thoughts toward one another coursing  
To their pole must run,  
Hearts that meet, all bonds are forcing,  
Like the springtime sun.  
Though to-day too heavy sorrow  
Dull the mind of youth,  
Higher on the meeting's morrow  
Roll the tides of truth.

Though each man with courage fired  
Hundreds forward bore,  
Though a thousand died inspired,  
There is need of more.  
May a Northern Spring come blowing  
Over wood and field,  
Wake the hundred thousands, knowing  
Meeting-hour revealed!

Hail! A Northern day is written  
In the brightening sky;  
Darksome dread, that erst had smitten,  
Flees, now dawn is nigh.  
After Gjallar-horn blasts hollow,  
Tears and shame and blood,  
As so often, now shall follow  
Full the spirit's flood.

In our people's life deep-seated  
This is felt each day:  
Who grows stronger when defeated,  
Victor stands for aye.  
Our Spring-meeting's fullness swells now,  
Bearing prophecy  
Of the Spring whose hope upwells now:  
Hail, the Northern three!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Melody

The youth in the woods spent the whole day long,  
The whole day long;  
For there he had heard such a wonderful song,  
Wonderful song.

Willow-wood gave him a flute so fair,  
A flute so fair,--  
To try, if within were the melody rare,  
Melody rare.

Melody whispered and said: "I am here!"  
Said: "I am here!"  
But while he was listening, it fled from his ear,  
Fled from his ear.

Oft when he slept, it to him crept,  
It to him crept;  
And over his forehead in love it swept,  
In love it swept.

When he would seize it, his sleep took flight,  
His sleep took flight;  
The melody hung in the pallid night,  
In the pallid night.

"Lord, O my God, take me therein,  
Take me therein!  
The melody rare all my soul doth win,  
My soul doth win."

Answered the Lord: "'T is your friend alone,  
Your friend alone;  
Though never an hour you it shall own,  
You it shall own."

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Mother's Song**

Lord! Oh, hold in Thy hand my child,  
Guard by the river its playing!  
Send Thou Thy Spirit as comrade mild,  
Lest it be lost in its straying!  
Deep is the water and false the ground.  
Lord, if His arms shall the child surround,  
Drowned it shall not be, but living,  
Till Thou salvation art giving.

Mother, whom loneliness befalls,  
Knowing not where it is faring,  
Goes to the door, and its name there calls;  
Breezes no answer are bearing.  
This is her thought, that everywhere  
He and Thou for it always care;  
Jesus, its little brother,  
Follows it home to mother.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Norrone-Race

Norrone-race's longing,  
It was the sea's free wave,  
And fight of heroes thronging,  
And honor that it gave;  
Their thoughts and deeds upspringing  
From roots in Surtr's fire,  
With branches topward swinging  
To Yggdrasil aspire.

His course alone each guided,  
Oft brother-harm was done;  
Our vict'ries were divided,  
The honor gained was one.  
Each heard his call time-fated,  
First Norway, Denmark, came,  
The Swede the longest waited,  
But greatest grew his fame.

In eastern, western regions  
The Danish dragons shone,  
To Norway's roving legions  
Jerusalem was known.  
From sparks the Swedish spirit  
Struck forth in Poland's night,  
Through Lützen must inherit  
Full half the world its light.

First Norseman, Dane, agreeing  
In trying times were found,  
But Saga's will far-seeing  
By little men was bound;  
Then Norseman, Swede, agreeing,  
Time in its fullness found,  
And Saga's will far-seeing  
Shall nevermore be bound.

There is prophetic power  
In longing hearts of men,  
Foretells our union's hour '  
For great deeds once again.  
Each festival so glorious  
To solemn vows us draws:  
Forever be victorious  
Our blood's, our race's cause!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Ocean

... Oceanward I am ever yearning,  
Where far it rolls in its calm and grandeur,  
The weight of mountain-like fogbanks bearing,  
Forever wandering and returning.  
The skies may lower, the land may call it,  
It knows no resting and knows no yielding.  
In nights of summer, in storms of winter,  
Its surges murmur the self-same longing.

Yes, oceanward I am ever yearning,  
Where far is lifted its broad, cold forehead!  
Thereon the world throws its deepest shadow  
And mirrors whispering all its anguish.  
Though warm and blithesome the bright sun stroke it  
With joyous message, that life is gladness,  
Yet ice-cold, changelessly melancholy,  
It drowns the sorrow and drowns the solace.

The full moon pulling, the tempest lifting,  
Must loose their hold on the flowing water.  
Down whirling lowlands and crumbling mountains  
It to eternity tireless washes.  
What forth it draws must the one way wander.  
What once is sunken arises never.  
No message comes thence, no cry is heard thence;  
Its voice, its silence, can none interpret.

Yes, toward the ocean, far out toward ocean,  
That knows no hour of self-atonement!  
For all that suffer release it offers,  
But trails forever its own enigma.  
A strange alliance with Death unites it,  
That all it give Him,--itself excepting!

I feel, vast Ocean, thy solemn sadness,  
To thee abandon my weak devices,  
To thee let fly all my anxious longings:  
May thy cool breath to my heart bring healing!  
Let Death now follow, his booty seeking:  
The moves are many before the checkmate!  
Awhile I'll harass thy love of plunder,  
As on I scud 'neath thy angry eyebrows;  
Thou only fillest my swelling mainsail,  
Though Death ride fast on thy howling tempest;  
Thy billows raging shall bear the faster  
My little vessel to quiet waters.

Ah! Thus alone at the helm in darkness,  
By all forsaken, by Death forgotten,  
When sails unknown far away are wafted  
And some swift-coursing by night are passing,  
To note the ground-swell's resistless current,

The sighing heart of the breathing ocean --  
Or small waves plashing along the planking,  
Its quiet pastime amid its sadness.  
Then glide my lingering longings over  
Into the ocean-deep grief of nature,  
The night's, the water's united coldness  
Prepares my spirit for death's dark dwelling.

Then comes day's dawning! My soul bounds upward  
On beams of light to the vault of heaven;  
My ship-steed sniffing its flank is laving  
With buoyant zest in the cooling billow.  
With song the sailor to masthead clammers  
To clear the sail that shall swell more freely,  
And thoughts are flying like birds away  
Round mast and yard-arm, but find no refuge. ...  
Yes, toward the ocean! To follow Vikar!  
To sail like him and to sink as he did,  
For great King Olaf the prow defending!  
With keel unswerving the cold thought cleaving,  
But hope deriving from lightest breezes!  
Death's eager fingers so near the rudder,  
While heaven's clearness the way illumines!

And then at last in the final hour  
To feel the bolts and the nails are yielding  
And Death is pressing the seams asunder,  
That in may stream the absolving water!  
Wet winding-sheets shall be folded round me,  
And I descend to eternal silence,  
While rolling billows my name bear shoreward  
In spacious nights 'neath the cloudless moonlight!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The poet

The poet does the prophet's deeds;  
In times of need with new life pregnant,  
When strife and suffering are regnant,  
His faith with light ideal leads.  
The past its heroes round him posts,  
He rallies now the present's hosts,  
The future opes  
Before his eyes,  
Its pictured hopes  
He prophesies.  
Ever his people's forces vernal  
The poet frees,-by right eternal.

He turns the people's trust to doubt  
Of heathendom and Moloch-terror;  
'Neath thought of God, cold-gray with error,  
He sees grow green each fresh, new sprout.  
Set free, these spread abroad, above,  
Bear fruit of power and of love  
In each man's soul,  
And make it warm  
And make it whole,  
In wrath transform,  
Till light and courage fill the nation:  
In  
life  
is God's best revelation.

Away the kingly cloak he tears  
And on the people's shoulder places,  
So it no more need make grimaces  
To borrowed clothes some highness wears,  
But be itself its majesty  
In right of spirit-dynasty,  
In saga's light  
On heart and brain,  
In men of might  
From its loins ta'en,  
In will unbiased and unbroken,  
In manly deed and bold word spoken.

His songs the nation's sins chastise,  
He hates a lie, as truth's high teacher  
(No Sunday-, but a weekday-preacher,  
Who, suffering, still the wrong defies).  
Against false peace he plies his lance,  
'Gainst cowardice and ignorance,-  
No bribe he knows  
From nation's hand  
Nor king's command;  
But  
his

way goes.  
And when he wavers, sorrow scourges  
His heart and free of passion purges.

He is a brother of the small,  
Of women, as of all who suffer,  
The new and weak, when waves grow rougher,  
He steers, till fairer breezes fall.  
Greater he grows without his will  
By deeds his calling to fulfil,  
And near the tomb  
To God he sighs,  
That soon may rise  
A richer bloom  
To deck his people's soul with flowers  
Of beauty far beyond his powers.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The Princess**

The princess looked down from her bower high,  
The youth blew his horn as he lingered thereby.  
"Be quiet, O youth, will forever you blow?  
It hinders my thoughts, that would far away go,  
Now, when sets the sun."

The princess looked down from her bower high,  
The youth ceased his blowing, his horn he laid by.  
"Why are you so quiet? Now more shall you blow,  
It lifts all my thoughts, that would far away go,  
Now, when sets the sun."

The princess looked down from her bower high,  
The youth blew again, as he lingered thereby.  
Then weeping, she whispered: "O God, let me know  
The name of this sorrow that burdens me so! --  
Now has set the sun."

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Pure Norwegian Flag

I

Tri-colored flag, and pure,  
Thou art our hard-fought cause secure;  
Thor's hammer-mark of might  
Thou bearest blue in Christian white,  
And all our hearts' red blood  
To thee streams its full flood.

Thou liftest us high when life's sternest,  
Exultant, thou oceanward turnest;  
Thy colors of freedom are earnest  
That spirit and body shall never know dearth.-  
Fare forth o'er the earth!

II

'The pure flag is but pure folly,'  
You 'wise' men maintain for true.  
But the flag is the truth poetic,  
The folly is found in you.  
In poetry upward soaring,  
The nation's immortal soul  
With hands invisible carries  
The flag toward the future goal.  
That soul's every toil and trial,  
That soul's every triumph sublime,  
Are sounding in songs immortal,-  
To their music the flag beats time.  
We bear it along surrounded  
By mem'ry's melodious choir,  
By mild and whispering voices,  
By will and stormy desire.  
It gives not to others guidance,  
Can not a Swedish word say;  
It never can flaunt allurements:-  
Clear the foreign colors away!

III

The sins and deceits of our nation  
Possess in the flag no right;  
The flag is the high ideal  
In honor's immortal light.  
The best of our past achievements,  
The best of our present prayers,  
It takes in its folds from the fathers  
And bears to the sons and heirs;  
Bears it all pure and artless,  
By tokens that tempt us unmarred,  
Is for our will's young manhood  
Leader as well as guard.

IV

They say: 'As by rings of betrothal

We are by the flag affied!  
But Norway is  
not  
betrothèd,  
She  
is  
no one's promised bride.  
She shares her abode with no one,  
Her bed and her board to none yields,  
Her will is her worthy bridegroom,  
Herself rules her sea, her fields.  
Our brother to eastward honors  
This independence of youth.

He  
knows well that by it only  
Our wreath can be won in truth.  
When we from the flag are taking  
His colors,  
he  
knows 't is no whim,  
But merely because we are holding  
Our honor higher than him.  
And none who himself has honor  
Will seek him a different friend;  
Our life we can for him offer,  
But naught of our flag can lend.

V  
TO SWEDEN  
Respectful I seek a hearing,  
With trust in your temper sane,  
And plead now our cause before you  
In words that are calm and plain:

If, Sweden,  
you  
were the smaller,  
Were young your freedom's renown,  
Had  
your  
flag a mark of union  
That pressed you still farther down  
By saying that you, as little,  
Were set at the greater's board  
(For this is the mark's real meaning,  
By no one on earth ignored),  
Yes, if it were you,-and your freedom  
Not hallowed by age, but young,  
And a century's want and weakness  
Still heavy in memory hung,  
The soul of your nation harrowed

By old injustice and need,  
By luckless labor and longing,  
-And did you its meaning heed;  
Yes, if it were you, whose duty  
To teach your people were tried,  
To honor their new-born freedom,  
To find in their flag their guide:  
Would longer you suffer it sundered,  
Leave foreign a single field?  
Would you not claim it unplundered,  
Your independence to shield?  
Would not to yourself you say then:  
'If one has high lineage long,  
If greater his colors' glory,  
The more alluring his song.  
Oh, tempt not him who from trouble  
Is rising with new found might;  
With pure marks direct him, rather,  
To honor's exalted height.'

Thus  
you  
would speak, elder hero,  
If  
you  
in  
our  
home abode;  
Your wont is the way of honor,  
You fare on the forward road.  
From eighteen hundred and fourteen,  
And down to the latest day,  
So oft for our independence  
We stood like the stag at bay,  
Brave men have risen among you,  
And scorning the strife that swelled  
Have talked for our cause high-minded,  
Like Torgny to them of old.

#### VI ANSWER TO THE AGED RIDDERSTAD

You say, it is 'knightly duty,'  
The fight for the flag to share,-  
I hold you full high in honor,  
But-  
that  
is our own affair!  
For just because we encounter  
The storm-blasts of slander stark,  
It's 'knightly duty' to free now  
The flag from the marring mark.

The 'parity' that mark preaches  
Flies false over all the seas;  
A pan-Scandinavian Sweden  
Can never our nation please.  
From 'knightly duty' the smaller  
Must say: I am not a part;  
The mark of my freedom and honor  
Is whole for my mind and heart.  
From 'knightly duty' the greater  
Must say: A falsehood's fair sign  
Can give me no special honor,  
No longer shall it be mine.  
For both it is 'knightly duty,'  
With flags that are pure, to be  
A warring world's bright example  
Of peoples at peace, proud and free.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Spinner

Oh, what was it he meant  
By his question as he went?  
'I am making a loom,  
'T will be up in April's bloom;  
If you think it may be,  
Spin for me!'

Oh, what shall I believe?  
Does he think himself to weave?  
And the yarn that I spin,  
Lo, he thinks to weave it in?  
And so soon as the Spring  
Flowers shall bring?

And he laughed when he'd done;  
Oh, he is so full of fun.  
Dare I trust all my skein  
To so young and wild a swain?-  
May God help to bind in  
All I spin!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Tree

Ready with leaves and with buds stood the tree.  
"Shall I take them?" the frost said, now puffing with glee.  
    "Oh my, no, let them stand,  
    Till flowers are at hand!"  
All trembling from tree-top to root came the plea.

Flowers unfolding the birds gladly sung.  
"Shall I take them?" the wind said and merrily swung.  
    "Oh my, no, let them stand,  
    Till cherries are at hand!"  
Protested the tree, while it quivering hung.

The cherries came forth 'neath the sun's glowing eye.  
"Shall I take them?" a rosy young girl's eager cry.  
    "Oh my, yes, you can take,  
    I've kept them for your sake!"  
Low bending its branches, the tree brought them nigh.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## The Tryst

Silent I'm biding,  
While softly gliding  
Sink the still hours to eternity's sleep.  
My fancies roaming  
List in the gloaming:-  
Will she the trysting now keep?

Winter is dreaming,  
Bright stars are beaming,  
Smiling their light through its cloud-veil they pour,  
Summer foretelling  
Sweet love compelling;-  
Dare she not meet me here more?

'Neath the ice lying,  
Longing and sighing,  
Ocean would wander and warmer lands woo.  
Anchored ships swinging,  
Sail-thoughts outflinging;-  
Come we together, we two!

Whirling and fallings  
Pictures enthralling,  
Fairy-light made in the forest the snow;  
Wood-folk are straying,  
Shadows are playing;-  
Was it your footstep? Oh, no!

Courage is failing,  
Hoar frost assailing  
Boughs of your longing surrounds with its spell.  
But I dare enter,  
Break to the center,  
Where in dream-fetters you dwell.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **The white rose and the red rose**

The white rose and the red rose,  
So sisters two were named, yes, named.  
The white one was so quiet,  
The red one laughed and flamed.  
But different was their doing, yes,  
When came the time of wooing, yes.  
The white one turned so red, so red,  
The red one turned so white.

For him the red one favored,  
Him father would not bless, not bless.  
But him the white one favored,  
He got at once his 'Yes.'  
The red one now was paling, yes,  
With sorrow, psalms, and wailing, yes.  
The white one turned so red, so red,  
The red one turned so white.

Then father grew so fearful  
And had to give his 'Yes,' oh, yes!  
With songs and music cheerful  
The wedding rang, oh, yes!  
And soon sprang children rosen, yes,  
In shoes and little hosen, yes.  
The red one's, they were white,-and oh,  
The white one's, they were red.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## They Have Found Each Other

Mute they wander,  
Meeting yonder,  
In the wondrous Spring new-born,  
That though old as Time's first morn,  
Brings fresh youth to all the living,  
Now held fast, now far retreating,  
But through hearts in oneness beating  
Ever fullest bloom is giving.  
Mute they wander. E'en the eye  
Speaks no thought. For from on high  
To their souls sweet strains have spoken  
From the wide world's harmony,  
Born of light, the darkness broken,  
In the dawn of things to be.  
Power crowned-  
Earth around  
Like a sun-song rolled the sound.  
Mute they wander. Sweet strains ending-  
Eye nor tongue dares yet the lending  
Speech to thought.  
But lo! quick blending,  
All things speak! They sound and shimmer,  
Bloom in fragrance, ring and glimmer,  
Tint and tone combining, nearer,  
Meet as one-with all their thinking  
In one beauty, higher, clearer,-  
Heaven itself to earth is sinking.

But in this great hour of trysting  
Life is opened, its course brightened,  
Growth eternal calls, enlisting  
Every spirit-power heightened.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Those with me

As on I drive, in my heart joy dwells  
Of Sabbath silence with sound of bells.  
The sun lifts  
all  
that is living, growing,  
God's love itself in its symbol showing.  
To church pass people from near and far,  
Soon psalms ascend from the door ajar.  
-Good cheer! Your greeting hailed more than me,  
But that in hastening you failed to see.

Here's goodly company with me riding,  
Though oft they cunningly keep in hiding;  
But when you saw me so Sunday-glad,  
It was because of the mates I had.  
And when you heard me so softly singing,  
The tones attuned to their hearts were ringing.

One soul is here of such priceless worth,  
For me she offered her all on earth;  
Yes, she who smiled in my boat storm-driven,  
And blanched not, braving the waves wind-riven,  
In whose white arms that in love caressed me  
Full warmth of life and of faith possessed me.

The snail in this I am like when faring,-  
My home I ever am with me bearing;  
And who believes it is burdensome,  
He ought to learn how it's good to come  
And creep in under the roof thereafter,  
Where she gives light amid children's laughter.

No poet paints nor can thinker tell  
So vast a vault or so deep a well,  
As where the glory of God's own love  
On cradle-mirror falls from above.  
Your soul is brighter, your heart more tender,  
When by the cradle your thanks you render.

Who knows not love in the small and near,  
The many in memory hold not dear.  
Who cannot build him a house his own,  
What towers he builds will be soon o'erthrown.  
From Moscow victor to Carthage,  
He vanquished dies on his Saint Helena.

When such a stronghold you've reared with labor,  
It often safely protects your neighbor;  
Though work of woman's and children's hands,  
Your soul finds strength where that fortress stands,  
You go hence braver to battle-dangers,  
Can courage give unto countless strangers.

One home bore often a whole land's fate,  
And sent the hero who saved the state;  
Thousands of  
homes  
, when the war was o'er,  
The land delivered in safety bore.  
So bear it onward in peace and beauty  
The hearts of homes beating true to duty.

Though foreign perfumes be fine and rare,  
Still pure alone is the home's sweet air.  
Naught meets you there but the childlike, truthful,  
And sin is kissed from your forehead ruthful.  
To heaven's home leads its door ajar,  
For thence it came and it lies not far.

Good cheer, to church on your way not staying!  
For those we love we shall both be praying;  
In prayer together the way we wander  
That leads from this to the home up yonder.  
You enter in; I must journey far,  
While follow psalms from the door ajar.  
Good cheer! Your greeting hailed more than me,  
But that in hastening you failed to see.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **To A Godson**

(With an album containing portraits of all those who at the time of his birth were leaders in the intellectual and political world.)

Here hast thou before thee that constellation  
Whereunder was born thy light;  
These stars in the vault of high thoughts' mutation  
Will fashion thy life with might.  
Their prophecy, little one, we cannot know,  
They light up the way that, unknown, thou shalt go  
And kindle the thoughts that within shall glow.  
Thou first shalt them gather,  
Then choose thine own,-  
So canst thou the rather  
Grove on alone.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

### **To aasmund olafsen vinje (sung at his wife's grave)**

Your house to guests has shelter lent,  
While you with pen were seated.  
In silent quest they came and went,  
You saw them not, nor greeted.  
But when now they  
Were gone away,  
Your babe without a mother lay,  
And you had lost your helpmate.

The home you built but yesterday  
In death to-day is sinking,  
And you stand sick and worn and gray  
On ruins of your thinking.  
Your way lay bare  
Since child you were,  
The shelter that you first could share  
Was this that now is shattered.

But know, the guests that to you came  
In sorrow's waste will meet you;  
Though shy you shrink, they still will claim  
The right with love to treat you.  
For where you go  
To you they show  
The world in radiant light aglow  
Of great and wondrous visions.

What once you saw, now passing o'er,  
Will but be made the clearer;  
It is the far eternal shore,  
That on your way draws nearer.  
Your poet-sight  
Will see in light  
All that the clouds have wrapped in night;-  
Great doubts will find an answer.

And later when you leave again  
The waste of woe thought-pregnant,  
Whom you have met shall teach us then.  
Your pen in power regnant.  
From sorrow's weal  
With purer zeal,  
Inspiring light, and pain's appeal  
Shall shine your wondrous visions.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Erika Lie

When Norse nature's dower  
Tones will paint with power,  
There is more than mountain-heights that tower,-  
Plains spread wide-extending,  
Whereon at their wending  
Summer nights soft dews are sending.

Forests great are growing,  
And in long waves going  
Glommen's valley fill to overflowing,-  
There are green slopes vernal,  
Glad with joy fraternal,  
Open to the light supernal.

For revealing wholly  
All things fine and holy-  
As in sunshine birds are soaring slowly,  
Or, their spells transmitting,  
Northern Lights are flitting,-  
None but maiden-hands are fitting.

Your  
hands came, and playing,  
O'er their secrets straying  
Picture after picture are portraying,  
As the poet dreamed them,  
In soul-travail teemed them,  
Till your artist hands redeemed them.

Now their light far-flinging  
We see flashing, swinging,  
Sparks as from your father's humor springing;  
Now there meets us nigher,  
Mirroring the higher,  
Mother's eye of softer fire.

Child-heart tones are holding  
All our minds and molding,  
So its faith the wide world is enfolding,  
While your sweet sounds sally,  
Truth to tell and rally,  
Maiden blonde from Glommen's valley.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Hans Christian Andersen

We welcome you this wondrous summer-day,  
When childhood's dreams on earth are streaming,  
To bloom and sing, to brighten and to pale;  
A fairy-tale,  
A fairy-tale, our Northland all is seeming,  
And holds you in its arms a festal space  
With grateful glee and whisperings face to face.  
Th' angelic noise,  
Sweet strains of children's joys,  
Bears you a moment to that home  
Whence all our dreams, whence all our dreams have come.

We welcome you! Our nation all is young,  
Still in that age of dreams enthralling,  
When greatest things in fairy-tales are nursed,  
And he is first,  
And he is first, who hears his Lord's high calling.  
Of childhood's longings you the meaning know,  
And to the North a goal of greatness show.  
Your fantasy  
Has just that path made free,  
Where, past the small things that you hate,  
We yet shall find, we yet shall find the great.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Johan Dahl, Bookdealer

(On His Sixtieth Birthday)

Our glasses we lift now and drink to our host!  
'Hurrah!'

Give heed to our ditty, we sing you our toast!  
'Aha!'

The first thing appearing is what he was nearing,  
When uproar not fearing he came for a hearing  
'Fore skerry-bred eagle  
And Wergeland regal.  
Oh! Ha!

He came like an innocent spring-lambkin ewe-born,  
Oh, woe!  
So neat and so fine in his guilelessness new-born  
Like snow.  
The flesh so delicious was chopped up to farce-meat,  
And later by Wergeland found for a farce meet,  
And gayly 't was swallowed,  
And all the bones hollowed  
And strown.

But swift as Thor's he-goats to life again skipping,  
He sprang  
Whole skinned together, and gave them a whipping  
That rang.  
This made him seem worthy to join the gay party,  
At once they received him in fellowship hearty!  
And soon was no other  
More loved as a brother  
Than Dahl.

The light from his shop spread afar and made brighter  
Our day.  
His drawing-room gathered so many a fighter  
In play.  
Our taste there was made and our critical passion,  
The shop was a power, new Norway to fashion.  
Though little, its story  
Shall some time in glory  
Be writ.

For what you have kindled, endured, and aspired,  
Our thanks!  
For hearts you have gladdened and souls you have fired,  
Our thanks!  
For all your good faith in your fervor and ranting,  
Yes, for your whole-heartedness free from all canting,  
You whimsical, queer one,  
Old fellow, you dear one,  
Our thanks!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Johan Sverdrup

When now my song selects and praises  
Your forceful name, think not it raises  
The rallying-flag for battle near;  
The street-fight shall not reach us here.  
If sacred poetry's fair hill  
Lies open to assassination,-  
Is  
this  
the newer revelation,  
Then I withdraw and hold me still.  
Then I the words of Einar borrow,  
When southern change of kings brought sorrow,  
And Harald's hosts their ravage spread:  
I follow rather Magnus dead  
Than Harald living thus,-and then  
I sail away with ships and men.  
Nor therefore do I lift anew  
The flag of song just now for you,  
Because my spirit's deepest yearning  
To you for new light now is turning.  
No, where the  
greatest  
questions started,  
Just there it is our ways were parted-  
From where the deepest thought can reach,  
To plan and goal of daily speech.  
My childhood's faith unshaken stands,  
And thence our equal rights deriving,  
I for a people free am striving  
And brotherhood in kindred lands.  
Though both of us are  
Christian  
men,  
So wide a gulf between us lies;  
Though both are true  
Norwegian  
men,  
We Norway see with different eyes.  
If but to-day we victory gain,  
We must to-morrow fight amain.  
But now I honor you in singing,  
Because what ought just now to be  
With strongest will you clearly see,  
And foremost to the fight are springing.  
When sinks the land 'neath heavy fogs  
And no fair prospect cheers the eye,  
The thickening air our breathing clogs,  
Yes, all things dull in torpor lie,-

Then  
mounts your mind with freest motion,  
Its thunder-wings the mist-banks driving,

Its lightning-talons cloud-walls riving,  
Till sunlight spreads o'er land and ocean.

You  
are the freshening shower clean  
Upon our sluggish day's routine.  
You are the salt sea-current poured  
Into each close and sultry fjord.  
Your speech a mine-shaft is, deep-going  
To where the veins of ore are showing.  
And by your flashing eyes far-sighted  
The past is for our future lighted.  
So long as Sverre's sword you wield,  
So long as you our hosts are heading,  
We know we'll win on every field;  
Foes flee, your battle trumpet dreading.  
We see their struggling ranks soon rifted,  
We see them set so many a snare:  
Your head unharmed in thought's pure air  
Above the waves of war is lifted.  
We love you for this courage good,  
That e'er  
before  
the banner stood,  
We love the strength you boldly stored  
In your self-forged and tempered sword.  
Your vigilance we love and prize,  
That sickness, slander, loss defies,  
We love you, that at duty's call  
You gave your peace, your future, all,  
We love you still-hate cannot cleave!-  
Because you dared in us believe.  
How can they hope that backward here  
Our land shall go? No, year by year,  
Forward in freedom and in song,  
Forward the truly Norse disclosing.  
What might can now avail, opposing  
The travail of the centuries long?  
People and power no more divided;  
In peace to save or war to kill,  
Our freedom with  
one  
guard provided,

One  
nation only and  
one  
will.  
The spirit of our nation's morn,  
The unity of free gods dreaming,  
And all things great to be great deeming,  
Forever must the spurious scorn.

The spirit that impelled the viking  
 'Gainst kingly power for freedom striking,-  
 That, threatened, sailed to Iceland strong  
 With hero-fame and hero-song,  
 And further on through all the ages,-  
 That spirit never dwells in cages.  
 The spirit that at Hjörung broke  
 For thousand years the foreign yoke,  
 By might of king ne'er made to cower,  
 Defying e'en the papal power,-  
 The spirit that, to weakness worn,  
 Held free our soil with rights unshorn,  
 Held free, with tongue and hand combined,  
 'Gainst foreign host and foreign mind,-  
 By which our Holberg's wit was whetted,  
 And Wessel's sword and Wessel's pen,  
 And to whose silent forge indebted  
 The thoughts that armed our Eidsvold-men,-  
 The spirit that in faith so high  
 Through Odin could to God draw nigh,  
 As bridge the myth of Balder threw,  
 And almost found the free way new  
 To truth's fair home in radiant Gimle,  
 When this was closed and warded grimly  
 By monkish lies and papal speech,-  
 That threw a second bridge to reach  
 On freedom's lightly soaring arches  
 To heights whereon the free soul marches,-  
 So, when for Luther blood was shed,  
 The North but razed a fence instead,  
 -The spirit that, when men were deeming  
 True faith in all the world were dead,  
 Brun, Hauge, and their lineage spread,  
 From soul-springs in our nation streaming,-  
 Though pietism's fog now thickens,  
 Still guards the altar lights and quickens;-  
 Can  
 this  
 they make the fashion better,  
 By modern bishop-synod's letter?  
 Is  
 this  
 by politics provided,  
 When into 'Chambers' 't is divided?  
 Can  
 this  
 into a box be juggled  
 And o'er the boundary be smuggled?

And that just now when beacons lighted  
 On all the mountain-tops are sighted,  
 And when our folk-high-school's young day

The Norse heart kindles with its ray,  
Renewing mem'ries, courage bringing,  
While they are hearing, trusting, singing;-  
Just when the deep in billows surges,  
Responsive to the tempest's might,  
And over it the Northern Light  
Of Youth's refulgent hope emerges;-  
Just when the spirit everywhere,  
While walls lie low as trumpets blare,  
Is breaking from the ancient forms,  
And will of youth the heights now storms.

A battle-age,-and we are in it!  
The greatest thing on earth: to be  
Where powers that are bursting free,  
Self-shaping seek their place and win it;-  
Our fusing passion all to give,  
To cast the statue that shall live,  
To press the mold of our own form  
On what shall be the future's norm,  
Into the age's soul thus breathed  
The spirit God to us bequeathed.

'T was this that now I wished to say  
To you, who late and early, aye  
Within time's workshop great are going,  
What is, what shall be, ever knowing;-  
To you, who all our people's might  
Have roused for freedom new to fight;-  
To whom our people gave this power,  
And sorrow, its eternal dower.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **To Missionary Skrefsrud In Santalistan**

I honor you, who, though refused, affronted,  
Have heard the voice, and victory have won;  
I honor you, who still by malice hunted,  
Show miracles of faith and power done.

I honor you, God-thirsting soul so driven,  
'Mid scorn and need the spirit's war to wage;  
I honor you, by Gudbrand's valley given,  
And of her sons the foremost in this age.

I do not share your faith, your daring dreaming;  
This parts us not, the spirit's paths are broad.  
For, all things great and noble round us streaming,  
I worship them, because I worship God.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Molde

Molde, Molde,  
True as a song,  
Billowy rhythms whose thoughts fill with love me,  
Follow thy form in bright colors above me,  
Bear thy beauty along.  
Naught is so black as thy fjord, when storm-lashes  
Sea-salted scourge it and inward it dashes,  
Naught is so mild as thy strand, as thine islands,  
Ah, as thine islands!  
Naught is so strong as thy mountain-linked ring,  
Naught is so sweet as thy summer-nights bring.  
Molde, Molde,  
True as a song,  
Murm'ring memories throng.

Molde, Molde,  
Flower-o'ergrown,  
Houses and gardens where good friends wander!  
Hundreds of miles away,-but I'm yonder  
'Mid the roses full-blown.  
Strong shines the sun on that mountain-rimmed beauty,  
Fast is the fight, let each man do his duty.  
Friends, who your favor would never begrudge me,  
Gently now judge me!-  
Only with life ends the fight for the right.  
Thought flees to you for a refuge in light.  
Molde, Molde,  
Flower-o'ergrown,  
Childhood's memories' throne.

Oh, may at last  
In thine embrace, life's fleeting  
Conflict past,  
Glad thine evening-glory greeting,  
-Where life let thought awaken,-  
My thought by death be taken!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To my father (upon his retirement)

In all the land our race was once excelling.  
In richer regions it e'en now possesses  
Broad seats and fruitful; but by fate's hard stresses

Our  
branch was bent and bowed to blows compelling.  
Now toward the light again it lifts aloft  
Its top, and fresh buds crown it, fair and soft.  
The flowing fountain of  
your  
faith has laved it,  
To life's late evening thus your strength has saved it.

As rests the race in time of chill and rigor,  
And from the deeps that lie within its being  
Draws to it what alone can nourish, freeing  
Its powers to full prophecy of vigor,-  
So I divined the unseen stir in you  
Of nature's might that you could not subdue;  
It was so strong, from sire to son surviving,  
In mystery mute descends this power's striving.

Upon this poured its radiant warmth pervading  
My mother's soul; of wedded joy the glory  
Crowns not alone your aged heads and hoary;  
But it shall death outlive in light unfading.  
And if my people ever truly prize  
The pictured home that in my writings lies,  
Honor of love and faith serene, unbroken,-  
Of father, mother, both, shall praise be spoken.

If men remember the Norwegian peasant,  
As from the field of toil or saga fateful  
I conjured him; to you they shall be grateful,  
Father, in whom love let me find him present.  
And if the woman whom I made them view  
In sun-like splendid faith and spirit true,  
By women is approved, it is the other  
Who has their homage, my sweet-natured mother.

And now you'll rest the evening long and cheery  
From the day's work in fair or troubled weather,  
And of the by-gone time you'll talk together,  
Of many a mile you trod with footsteps weary,-  
Now will as sunlight on the winter's snow,  
A warmth of thanks in through the window glow,  
Harsh memories mellow with its golden shining,  
Your life in faith complete find its refining.

But none gives thanks as now that son in gladness,  
For whom you lived in anxious fear unceasing,  
Since forth he flew with strength of wing increasing,

For whom to God you prayed in joy and sadness.  
Oh, know, when hot my blood burned over-much,  
I felt your soothing hands my forehead touch,  
And oft, my heart in mute repentance bleeding,  
In thoughts of you I heard God's gentle pleading.

And so I pray that I may have the power  
(Since we again for life shall be united,  
And hope 'mid mirthful mem'ries be relighted),  
To brighten now their every evening-hour!  
When children's children in their arms shall be,  
Oh, let them morning in their evening see!  
So shall they gladly lay, when death gives warning,  
Their gray heads down to greet the dawning morning.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **To My Wife**

(With a set of Roman Pearls)

Pray, take these pearls!-and my thanks for them

You lavished, the home of my youth to gem!

The thousands of hours of peaceful luster

Your spirit has filled, are pearls that cluster

With beauty blest

On my happy breast,

And softly shining

My brow are entwining

With thoughts whence the truth gleams: Thus gave his wife,

Who jeweled with tenderest love his life!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Sculptor Borch

(On his fiftieth birthday)  
With friends you stalwart stand and fair,  
To-day of fifty years the heir;  
The past your works rejoicing praise,  
But forward goes your gaze.  
Your childlike faith, your spirit true,  
Your hand that never weary grew,  
A home's sweet music, love of wife,  
Make ever young your life.

You dared believe with heart alive  
That here in Norway art can thrive.  
You forced the hardness of our stones  
To harmony of tones.  
You laid our wild world's secrets bare  
And caught 'The Hunter' near the lair.  
Our nation's moods, of beauty born,  
Your 'Girl with Eggs' adorn.

As o'er a slope's snow-covered brow  
A youth came swiftly flying now,  
You saw him, raised your hand, and lo!  
He stood there, chiseled snow.  
But your 'Ski-runner's' courage good,  
It was your own, when forth you stood  
Art's champion by the world unawed,  
And with your faith in God.

You won your victory supreme  
Through rock-like faith and will's full stream  
While with unnumbered hours of rest  
Your love has others blessed.  
Were all now here from west and east  
Whose hearts you own, oh, what a feast!  
From Akershus the convicts e'en  
Would bear a freeman's mien.

Now we whose lives with good you filled  
For you to-day a palace build,  
On heights of heart's-ease lifting square  
Its golden tower of prayer.  
In peace you oft shall dwell in it,  
Whene'er you need to rest a bit,  
And feel through them who hold you dear  
Yourself to heaven near.

Long since our country to you gave  
The meed of thanks that most you crave;  
It gave a maid with golden hair,  
Its springtime's image fair.  
She came from where the fairies dwell,  
With nixie's charm and wood-nymph's spell,

With peace all holy, sweet, and calm,  
To sing of life the psalm.

So may your life yet long endure  
To light our gland, your home secure!  
May all that from your heart you gave,  
Still blossom on your grave!  
May God's protecting mercy hold  
Your spirit ever fresh and bold,-  
May He to genius oft impart  
Just such a mind and heart!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Stang

May Seventeenth in Eidsvold's church united,  
To hallow after fifty years the day  
When they who there our charter free indited,  
Together for our land were met to pray,-  
We both were there with thanks to those great men,  
With thanks to God, who to our people then  
In days of danger courage gave unbounded.

And when so mighty through the church now sounded  
'Praise ye the Lord!' lifting our pallid prayer  
To fellowship with all her sons, our brothers,  
I saw you, child-like, weep in secret there  
Upon the breast we love, our common mother's.

Then I remembered that from boyhood's hour  
With all your strength to serve her you have striven,  
Your youthful fire, your counsel cool have given,  
And till it waned, your manhood's wealth of power.  
With blessing then and praise of you I thought  
In thankful prayer, as one of those who fought  
To shield our land from storms of fate's hard weather,  
Till 'neath the roof in peace we sat together.

Of you I thought;-but so think few and fewer.  
Your manhood's fame ere you yourself has crumbled,  
And you, alas, will not find justice truer,  
Till you and yours one day have fallen, humbled.

For see, the roads you drew o'er hill and plain  
For all our people's onward-pressing longing,  
You dare not travel with the joyous train,  
That greater grows while towards its future thronging.  
You knew not what it was your labor wrought,  
When steam and powder, bursting every barrier,  
Gave new-born cravings each its speedy carrier  
And to the people's spirit power brought.  
The new day's work, as 't were the tempest's welter,  
In din about you seemed a dream, a fable,  
And with your like you built in fear a shelter  
From soul-unrest, a looming tower of Babel.

While now you wait for the impending fight,  
With gentle eye and stately head all hoary,  
And o'er the mountains gleams the morning's glory,-  
Your foes half hid amid the mists of night,-  
As from an outpost in the wooded wild,  
These words I send, of peace a token mild.

You fear the people? 'Tis your own that rally,  
And like the fog arisen from the valley.  
You think them rebels, void of sense and oneness?  
Yes, spring's full floods obey no rule precise;

Storm-squalls and slush render the roads less nice,  
The snow's pure white is partly soiled to dunness.  
But spring is born! The man of genius free,  
Prophetic, heeds its holy harmony;  
For genius shares the soul of what shall be.  
This you have not and never had an hour,  
And so you shrink before the people's power.

You were a foreman with the gift of leading,  
When pioneers cleared up a pathless tract;  
Your lucid thinking and your gracious tact  
Oft helped them over obstacles impeding.  
But what new growths the ancient fields have filled,  
From western seed to feed our land's wants tilled,  
And what new light shines through your window-pane,  
Longing for truth beneath religion's reign,  
And what new things but whispering we say,-  
And what foretells the dawning reckoning-day,-  
You fail to understand and find but madness  
In our young nation's fairest growth and gladness.

You answer: Poet's deeming is but dreaming,  
And in the statesman's art most unbeseeing.  
I answer: None has might men's life to sway,  
If impotent the worth of dreams to weigh.  
From cravings, powers that seek their form, ascending,  
They fill the air; their right to be defending,  
Till all men wakened to one goal are tending.  
His nation's dreams are all the statesman's life,  
Create his might, direct his aim in strife,  
And if he this forgets, the next dreams blooming  
Bring forth another, unto death him dooming.

The tempest-clouds that mount afresh and thicken  
Cannot so dense before the morn's light hover  
That we may not through cloud-rifts clear discover  
Great thoughts that new-born victories shall quicken.

Such thoughts are radiant over me to-day,  
And to my heart the warmer blood is streaming,  
And all we live for, all that we are dreaming,  
Its summons sends and strengthens for the fray.

The war-horns soon beneath the woods shall bray,  
Through dewy night th' assailing columns dash,  
Amid the sudden gleams of shot and slash  
The fog dissolve before our new-born day.

Soon, though you threaten, will the heights be taken  
For future ages, and our nation's soul  
Can thence o'erlook the land in might unshaken,  
With even hand and right to rule the whole.

It soon shall roll war's billows on to battle,  
While from the clouds the fathers' weapons rattle!  
O aged man, look round you where you stand,  
For soon you have against you all our land.

But when you fall defeated on the field,  
Then shall we say by your inverted shield:  
He stood against us, since he knew not better,  
A noble knight and never honor's debtor.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To Sweden

Lift thou thine ancient yellow-blue!  
Aloft the front must show it.  
The German's slow to take the cue,  
But seeing that he'll know it.

He'll know that greater danger's near  
Than ink on Bismarck's trousers;  
That it will cost him doubly dear,  
Men, horses, bovine browsers;

That ten years' nonsense now is done,  
The daily quarrel dirty  
Will soon become a war with one  
Who held his own for thirty;

The Northland's stubborn folk allied  
Their forces are uniting,  
With glorious memories to guide,  
The Northern heavens lighting;

That great Gustavus once again  
To battle glad is riding,  
But now  
against  
the Southern men

With  
Christian Fourth is siding,-

With Haakon Earl the times of old  
Round Palnatoki gather;  
Near Charles the Twelfth stands Tordenskjold,  
Placid, and smiling rather,-

That we, who have so well known how  
To fight against each other,  
Shall not exactly scorn earn now,  
When brother stands with brother.

But forward  
thou  
the way must lead  
With stirring drum-beats' rattle,  
Thy marching-step we all must heed,  
Thou 'rt known on fields of battle.

That ancient Swedish melody,  
Renowned in world-wide glory,  
Not merely for the heart's deep plea  
In Jenny's travel-story,-

But for the solemn earnestness

To Lützen's battle calling,  
And for the daring strains no less,  
That rang at Narwa's falling,-

The song thou sang'st the North t' inspire  
With virtue and with power,

The three must with united choir  
Lift up this very hour!

It now must bear aloft a hymn,  
The call of God proclaiming;  
Pictures of blood its lines shall limn,  
Drawn bold in letters flaming,-

Its name shall be: 'The Free North's Hymn!'  
Of all the hymns thou voicest,  
Whose glory time shall never dim,  
It shall be first and choicest.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## To The Dannebrog

(When Dybbol was captured)  
Dannebrog of old was seeming

Snow-white, rosy red,

Through the mists of ages beaming,  
Heaven's gift outspread,  
Rich as fruits of Denmark's planting,  
Grand as song of heroes chanting,  
Spirit-winged to deeds of daring  
O'er the wide world faring.

Dannebrog, thou now art seeming

Death-pale, bloody red,

Like a dying sea-gull gleaming  
White with blood o'erspread.  
Purple tides the wounds are showing  
From thy faith in justice flowing;  
Denmark, bear the cross, thy burden  
Honor is thy guerdon!

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Toast For The Men Of Eidsvold**

'Twas then this land of ours we drew  
From centuries of ice and sorrow,  
And let it of the sun's warmth borrow,  
And law and plow brought order new;  
We dug the wealth in mountain treasured,  
Our stately ships the oceans measured,  
And springtime thoughts were free to run  
As round the Pole the midnight sun.

And still with God we'll conquer, hold:  
Each plot reclaimed for harvest-reaping,  
Each ship our sea takes to its keeping,  
Each child-soul we to manhood mold,  
Each spark of thought our life illuming,  
Each deed to fruit of increase blooming,-  
A province adds unto our land  
And o'er our freedom guard shall stand.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Venevil

Fair Venevil hastened with tripping feet  
Her lover to meet.  
He sang, so it rang o'er the church far away:  
"Good-day! Good-day!"

And all the little birds sang right merrily their lay:  
"Midsummer Day  
Brings us laughter and play;  
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

She twined him a wreath of the flowers blue:  
"My eyes for you!"  
He tossed it and caught it and to her did bend:  
"Good-by, my friend!"  
And loudly he exulted at the field's far distant end:  
"Midsummer Day  
Brings us laughter and play;  
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

She twined him a wreath: "Do at all you care  
For my golden hair?"  
She twined one, and gave in life's hour so rare  
Her red lips' pair;  
He took them and he pressed them, and he blushed as she did there.

She twined one all white as a lily-band:  
"T is my right hand."  
She twined one blood-red, with her love in each strand:  
"T is my left hand."  
He took them both and kept them both, but would not understand.

She twined of the flowers that bloomed around  
"Every one I found!"  
She gathered and twined, while tears would her eyes fill:  
"Take them you will!"  
In silence then he took them, but to flight he turned him still.

She twined one so large, of discordant hue:  
"My bride's-wreath true!"  
She twined it and twined, till her fingers were sore:  
"Crown me, I implore!"  
But when she turned, he was not there, she never saw him more.

She twined yet undaunted without a stay  
At her bride's-array.  
But now it was long past the Midsummer Day,  
All the flowers away:  
She twined it of the flowers, though they all were now away!  
"Midsummer Day  
Brings us laughter and play;  
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## When comes the morning?

When  
comes the real morning?  
When golden, the sun's rays hover  
Over the earth's snow-cover,  
And where the shadows nestle,  
Wrestle,  
Lifting lightward the root enringed  
Till it shall seem an angel winged,  
Then it is morning,  
Real, real morning.  
But if the weather is bad  
And my spirit sad,  
Never morning I know.  
No.

Truly, it's real morning,  
When blossom the buds winter-beaten,  
The birds having drunk and eaten  
Are glad as they sing, divining  
Shining  
Great new crowns to the tree-tops given,  
Cheering the brooks to the broad ocean riven.  
Then it is morning,  
Real, real morning.  
But if the weather is bad  
And my spirit sad,  
Never morning I know.  
No.

When  
comes the real morning?  
When power to conquer parries  
Sorrow and storm, and carries  
Sun to the soul, whose burning  
Yearning  
Opens in love and calls to others:  
Good to be unto all as brothers.

Then  
it is morning,  
Real, real morning.  
Greatest power you know  
-And most dangerous, lo!-  
Will you  
this  
then possess?  
Yes.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## When Norway Would Not Help

When Kattegat now or the Belt you sail,  
No more will you sight  
The Danish proud frigate, no more will you hail  
The red and white;  
No more will the ringing command be heard  
In Wessel's tongue,  
No rollicking music, no jocund word,  
'Neath Dannebrog sung.  
No dance will you see, no laughter meet,  
As the white sails shine,  
From mast and from stern no garland you greet,  
Of arts the sign.  
But all that we owned of the treasures on board  
The deeps now hold;  
One sad winter night to the sea-waves were poured  
Our memories old.

It was that same night, when the frigate nigh  
To Norway's land  
Distress-guns was firing, the surf running high  
With sea-weed and sand.  
To help from the harbor men put out boats,  
But they turn back,...  
The frigate toward Germany drifting floats,  
A broken wrack!  
What once had been ours overboard was strown,  
Each kinship mark  
Was quickly removed, to the sea it was thrown  
With curses stark!  
The Northern lion, that figure-head gray,  
Now had to fall,  
In pieces 'twas hewn, and the frigate lay  
Like a shattered wall.

...  
Repaired and refitted, its canvas it spread  
Near Germany's coast,  
With black-yellow flag and an eagle dread  
In the lion's post.  
When sailing we Kattegat sweep with our eyes,  
'T is still evermore.  
But a German admiral's frigate lies  
Near Scania's shore.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Workmen's March

Left foot! Right foot! Lines unbroken!  
Keeping time is power's token.  
That makes  
one  
of many, many,  
That makes bold, if fear daunts any,  
That makes small the load and lighter,  
That makes near the goal and brighter,  
Till it greets us gained with laughter,  
And we seek the next one after.

Left foot! Right foot! Lines unbroken!  
Keeping time is power's token.  
Marching, marching of few hundreds,  
No one heeds it, never one dreads;  
Marching, marching of few thousands,  
Here and there wakes some to hearing;  
Marching, marching hundred thousands,-  
All will mark that thunder nearing.

Left foot! Right foot! Lines unbroken!  
Keeping time is power's token.  
Let us march all, never weaken  
Time from Vardö down to Viken,  
Vinger up to Bergen's region,-  
Let us make  
one  
marching legion,  
Then we'll rout some wrong from Norway,  
Open wide to right the doorway.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## **Young men and women, strong and sound**

Young men and women, strong and sound,  
Adorn with beautiful excess  
Of play and song and flower-dress  
Our fatherland's ancestral ground.  
They dream great deeds of ages older,  
They long to lead to battles bolder.

Young men and women, strong and sound,  
Our nation's honor are, in whom  
Our whole life has its better bloom,  
Rebirth upon our fathers' ground  
Of them of yore. Anew there flower  
The old in young folks' summer-power.

Young men and women, strong and sound,  
Can doubly do our deeds and fill  
With higher hope for all we will,-  
Are growth in character's deep ground,  
To larger life drawn by the spirit  
They from our forefathers inherit.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

## Youth

Mood of youth,  
Mood of youth,  
Eagle-like must seek the blue,  
Dauntlessly its course pursue,  
All the mountain-heights must view.  
Blood of youth,  
Blood of youth,  
Steam-like puts full-speed to sea,  
E'en though storm and ice there be,  
Makes its way and romps in glee.  
Dream of youth,  
Dream of youth,  
Rogue-like stealing sets its snare  
In the maiden's morning-prayer;  
All the springtime, fragrant, glowing,  
In its airy waves is flowing.  
Joy of youth,  
Joy of youth,  
Waterfall-like foams in truth,  
Laughing, rainbow-gifts forth flashing,  
Even while to death 't is dashing.  
Joy of youth,  
Dream of youth,  
Blood of youth,  
Mood of youth,  
Clothe the world with colors golden,  
Singing songs that never olden.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson