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**James Bayard Taylor**  
**- poems -**

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# James Bayard Taylor(11 January 1825 – 19 December 1878)

James Bayard Taylor was an American poet, literary critic, translator, and travel author.

## <b> Life and Work</b>

He was born on January 11, 1825, in Kennett Square in Chester County, Pennsylvania. He was the fourth son, first to live to maturity, of Joseph and Rebecca (née Way) Taylor. His father was a well-to-do farmer and young Bayard received his early instruction in an academy at West Chester, and later at Unionville. At the age of seventeen he was apprenticed to a printer in West Chester. His interest in poetry was coached by influential critic and editor Rufus Wilmot Griswold, who encouraged him to produce a volume of poetry. Published at Philadelphia in 1844 under the title *Ximena, or the Battle of the Sierra Morena*, and other Poems was dedicated to Griswold, though it brought its author little profit; and indirectly it did him better service as the means of his introduction to *The New York Tribune*.

With the money thus obtained, and with an advance made to him on account of some journalistic work to be done in Europe, JB Taylor (as he had up to this time signed himself, though he bore no other Christian name than Bayard) set sail for the East. The young poet spent a happy time in roaming through certain districts of England, France, Germany and Italy; that he was a born traveler is evident from the fact that this pedestrian tour of almost two years cost him only £100. The graphic accounts which he sent from Europe to *The New York Tribune*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *The United States Gazette* were so highly appreciated that on Taylor's return to America he was advised to throw his articles into book form.

In 1846, accordingly, appeared his *Views Afoot, or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff* (2 vols, New York). This pleasant book had considerable popularity, and its author now found himself a recognized man of letters. He was asked to serve as an editorial assistant for *Graham's Magazine* for a few months in 1848. That same year, Horace Greeley, then editor of the *Tribune*, placed Taylor on the *Tribune* staff thus securing Taylor a certain if a moderate income. His next journey, made when the gold-fever was at its height, was to California, as correspondent for the *Tribune*. From this expedition he returned by way of Mexico, and, seeing his opportunity, published (2 vols, New York, 1850) a highly

successful book of travels, entitled *El Dorado; or, Adventures in the Path of Empire*. Ten thousand copies were said to have been sold in America, and thirty thousand in Great Britain, within a fortnight from the date of issue.

Bayard Taylor always considered himself native to the East, and it was with great delight that in 1851 he found himself on the banks of the Nile, He ascended as far as 12' 30° N, and stored his memory with countless sights and delights, to many of which he afterwards gave expression in metrical form. From England, towards the end of 1852, he sailed for Calcutta, proceeding thence to China, where he joined the expedition of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry to Japan.

The results of these journeys (besides his poetical memorials) were *A Journey to Central Africa; or, Life and Landscapes from Egypt to the Negro Kingdoms of the White Nile* (New York, 1854); *The Lands of the Saracen; or, Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily and Spain* (1854); and *A Visit to India, China and Japan in the Year 1853* (1855).

#### <b>Marriage and Family</b>

In 1849 Taylor married Mary Agnew, but she died in 1850 of tuberculosis. In October 1857, he married Maria Hansen, the daughter of Peter Hansen, the Danish/German astronomer. They spent the ensuing winter in Greece.

#### <b>First return to the U.S.</b>

On his return (December 20, 1853) from his travel to Europe, Egypt and the Far East, Taylor began to tour as a public lecturer, to considerable success. He traveled to deliver addresses in every town of importance from Maine to Wisconsin. After two years, he again started on travel, on this occasion for northern Europe. His goal was to study Swedish life, language and literature. The trip inspired his long narrative poem *Lars*, but his *Swedish Letters to the Tribune* were also republished, under the title *Northern Travel: Summer and Winter Pictures* (London, 1857).

In 1859 Taylor once more traversed the western American gold region, in connection with an invitation to lecture at San Francisco. About three years later, he was appointed to the diplomatic service as secretary of legation at St. Petersburg, and the following year (1863) became chargé d'affaires at the Russian capital.

#### <b>Second return to the U.S.</b>

In 1864 Taylor and his wife Maria returned to the United States, where he resumed writing at their home near Kennett Square. He published *Hannah Thurston* (1863), the first of his four novels. This book had a moderate success, but Taylor was not considered so good a novelist as a poet and essayist.

His late novel, *Joseph and His Friend: A Story of Pennsylvania* (New York, 1870), recounts an intimate friendship between two men and is believed to be based on that between the poets Fitz-Greene Halleck and Joseph Rodman Drake. Since the late 20th-century, it has been called America's first gay novel. Taylor spoke at the dedication of a monument to Halleck in his native town, Guilford, Connecticut.

In 1874 Taylor traveled to Iceland, to report for the *Tribune* on the one thousandth anniversary of the first European settlement there. In June 1878 he was accredited United States Minister at Berlin. Traveling on the same ship to Europe was Mark Twain, who noted that he was envious of Taylor's command of German.

A few months after arriving in Berlin, Taylor died on December 19, 1878; his body was returned to the US and buried in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. The *New York Times* published his obituary on its front page, referring to him as "a great traveler, both on land and paper." Shortly after his death, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a memorial poem to Taylor, at the urging of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

### **<b>Legacy and Honors</b>**

Cedarcroft, Taylor's home from 1859 to 1874, which he built near Kennett Square, is preserved as a National Historic Landmark.

### **<b>Evaluations</b>**

According to the 1920 edition of *Encyclopedia Americana*:

It is by his translation of *Faust*, one of the finest attempts of the kind in any literature, that Taylor is generally known; yet as an original poet he stands well up in the second rank of Americans. His *Poems of the Orient* and his *Pennsylvania ballads* comprise his best work. His verse is finished and sonorous, but at times over-rhetorical.

According to the 1911 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

Taylor's most ambitious productions in poetry—his *Masque of the Gods* (Boston, 1872), *Prince Deukalion*; a lyrical drama (Boston, 1878), *The Picture of St John*

(Boston, 1866), *Lars; a Pastoral of Norway* (Boston, 1873), and *The Prophet; a tragedy* (Boston, 1874)—are marred by a ceaseless effort to overstrain his power. But he will be remembered by his poetic and excellent translation of Goethe's *Faust* (2 vols, Boston, 1870-71) in the original metres.

Taylor felt, in all truth, the torment and the ecstasy of verse; but, as a critical friend has written of him, his nature was so ardent, so full-blooded, that slight and common sensations intoxicated him, and he estimated their effect, and his power to transmit it to others, beyond the true value. He had, from the earliest period at which he began to compose, a distinct lyrical faculty: so keen indeed was his ear that he became too insistently haunted by the music of others, pre-eminently of Tennyson. But he had often a true and fine note of his own. His best short poems are *The Metempsychosis of the Pine* and the well-known Bedouin love-song.

In his critical essays Bayard Taylor had himself in no inconsiderable degree what he wrote of as that pure poetic insight which is the vital spirit of criticism. The most valuable of these prose dissertations are the *Studies in German Literature* (New York, 1879).

In Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography* of 1889, Edmund Clarence Stedman gives the following critique:

His poetry is striking for qualities that appeal to the ear and eye, finished, sonorous in diction and rhythm, at times too rhetorical, but rich in sound, color, and metrical effects. His early models were [Byron](http://www.poemhunter.com/george-gordon-lord-byron/) and [Shelley](http://www.poemhunter.com/percy-bysshe-shelley/), and his more ambitious lyrics and dramas exhibit the latter's peculiar, often vague, spirituality. *Lars*, somewhat after the manner of [Tennyson](http://www.poemhunter.com/alfred-lord-tennyson/), is his longest and most attractive narrative poem. *Prince Deukalion* was designed for a masterpiece; its blank verse and choric interludes are noble in spirit and mould. Some of Taylor's songs, oriental idyls, and the true and tender Pennsylvanian ballads, have passed into lasting favor, and show the native quality of his poetic gift. His fame rests securely upon his unequalled rendering of *Faust* in the original metres, of which the first and second parts appeared in 1870 and 1871. His commentary upon Part II for the first time interpreted the motive and allegory of that unique structure.

**Editions**

Collected editions of his *Poetical Works* and his *Dramatic Works* were published

at Boston in 1888; his *Life and Letters* (Boston, 2 vols, 1884) were edited by his wife and Horace Scudder.

Marie Hansen Taylor translated into German Bayard's *Greece* (Leipzig, 1858), Hannah Thurston (Hamburg, 1863), *Story of Kennett* (Gotha, 1868), *Tales of Home* (Berlin, 1879), *Studies in German Literature* (Leipzig, 1880), and notes to *Faust*, both parts (Leipzig, 1881). After her husband's death, she edited, with notes, his *Dramatic Works* (1880), and in the same year his *Poems* in a "Household Edition," and brought together his *Critical Essays and Literary Notes*. In 1885 she prepared a school edition of *Lars*, with notes and a sketch of its author's life.

# A Night With A Wolf

Little one come to my knee !  
Hark how the rain is pouring  
Over the roof in the pitch dark night,  
And the winds in the woods a-roaring

Hush, my darling, and listen,  
Then pay for the story with kisses;  
Father was lost in the pitch-black night  
In just such a storm as this is.

High on the lonely mountain  
Where the wild men watched and waited;  
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,  
And I on my path belated.

The rain and the night together  
Came down, and the wind came after,  
Bending the props of the pine tree roof  
And snapping many a rafter.

I crept along in the darkness,  
Stunned and bruised and blinded...  
Crept to a fir with thick-set boughs,  
And a sheltering rock behind it.

There, from the blowing and raining,  
Crouching I sought to hide me;  
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,  
And a wolf lay down beside me.

Little one, be not frightened;  
I and the wolf together,  
Side by side through the long, long night,  
Hid from the awful weather.

His wet fur pressed against me;  
Each of us warmed the other;  
Each of us felt in the stormy dark  
That beast and man was brother.

And when the falling forest  
No longer crashed in warning,  
Each of us went from our hiding place  
Forth in the wild wet morning.

Darling, kiss me in payment...  
Hark! how the wind is roaring!  
Father's house is a better place  
When the stormy rain is pouring.

Bayard Taylor

James Bayard Taylor



# America: From The National Ode, July 4, 1876

FORESEEN in the vision of sages,  
Foretold when martyrs bled,  
She was born of the longing of ages,  
By the truth of the noble dead  
And the faith of the living fed!  
No blood in her lightest veins  
Frets at remembered chains,  
Nor shame of bondage has bowed her head.  
In her form and features still  
The unblenching Puritan will,  
Cavalier honor, Huguenot grace,  
The Quaker truth and sweetness,  
And the strength of the danger-girdled race  
Of Holland, blend in a proud completeness.  
From the homes of all, where her being began,  
She took what she gave to Man;  
Justice, that knew no station,  
Belief, as soul decreed,  
Free air for aspiration,  
Free force for independent deed!  
She takes, but to give again,  
As the sea returns the rivers in rain;  
And gathers the chosen of her seed  
From the hunted of every crown and creed.  
Her Germany dwells by a gentler Rhine;  
Her Ireland sees the old sunburst shine;  
Her France pursues some dream divine;  
Her Norway keeps his mountain pine;  
Her Italy waits by the western brine;  
And, broad-based under all,  
Is planted England's oaken-hearted mood,  
As rich in fortitude  
As e'er went worldward from the island-wall!  
Fused in her candid light,  
To one strong race all races here unite;  
Tongues melt in hers, hereditary foemen  
Forget their sword and slogan, kith and clan.  
'T was glory, once, to be a Roman:  
She makes it glory, now, to be a man!

James Bayard Taylor

# Ariel In The Cloven Pine

NOW the frosty stars are gone:  
I have watched them one by one,  
Fading on the shores of Dawn.  
Round and full the glorious sun  
Walks with level step the spray,  
Through this vestibule of Day,  
While the wolves that late did howl  
Slink to dens and converts foul,  
Guarded by the demon owl,  
Who, last night, with mocking croon,  
Wheeled athwart the chilly moon,  
And with eyes that blankly glared  
On my direful torment stared.

The lark is flickering in the light;  
Still he nightingale doth sing;—  
All the isle, alive with Spring,  
Lies, a jewel of delight,  
On the blue sea's heaving breast;  
Not a breath from out the west,  
But some balmy smell doth bring  
From the sprouting myrtle buds,  
Or from meadowy vales that lie  
Like a green inverted sky,  
Which the yellow cowslip stars,  
And the bloomy almond woods,  
Cloud-like, cross with roseate bars.  
All is life that I can spy,  
To the farthest sea and sky,  
And my own the only pain  
Within this ring of Tyrrhene main.

In the gnarled and cloven Pine  
Where that hell-born hag did chain me,  
All this orb of cloudless shine,  
All this youth in Nature's veins  
Tingling with the season's wine,  
With a sharper torment pain me.  
Pansies in soft April rains

Fill their stalks with honeyed sap  
Drawn from Earth's prolific lap;  
But the sluggish blood she brings  
To the tough Pine's hundred rings,  
Closer locks their cruel hold,  
Closer draws the scaly bark  
Round the crevice, damp and cold,  
Where my useless, damp and cold,  
Sealing me in iron dark.

By this coarse and alien state  
Is my dainty essence wronged;  
Finer senses, that belonged  
To my freedom, chafe at Fate,  
Till the happier elves I hate,  
Who in moonlight dances turn  
Underneath the palmy fern,  
Or in light and twinkling bands  
Follow on with linkèd hands  
To the ocean's yellow sands.

Primrose-eyes each morning ope  
In their cool, deep beds of grass;  
Violets make the airs that pass  
Telltale of their fragrant slope.  
I can see them where they spring  
Never brushed by fairy wing.  
All those corners I can spy  
In the island's solitude,  
Where the dew is never dry,  
Nor the miser bees intrude.  
Cups of rarest hue are there,  
Full of perfumed wine undrained,—  
Mushroom banquets, ne'er profaned  
Canopied by maiden-hair.  
Pearls I see upon the sands,  
Never touched by other hands,  
And the rainbow bubbles shine  
On the ridged and frothy brine,  
Tenantless of voyager  
Till they burst in vacant air.  
Oh, the song that sung might be,

And the mazy dances woven,  
Had that witch ne'er crossed the sea  
And the Pine been never cloven!

Many years my direst pain  
Has made the wave-rocked isle complain  
Winds that from the Cyclades  
Came to blow in wanton riot  
Round its shore's enchanted quiet,  
Bore my wailings on the seas:  
Sorrowing birds in autumn West  
Through the world with my lament.  
Still the bitter fate is mine,  
All delight unshared to see,  
Smarting in the cloven Pine,  
While I wait the tardy axe  
Which, perchance, shall set me free  
From the demand witch Sycorax.

James Bayard Taylor

# Bedouin Song

FROM the Desert I come to thee  
On a stallion shod with fire;  
And the winds are left behind  
In the speed of my desire.  
Under thy window I stand,  
And the midnight hears my cry:  
I love thee, I love but thee,  
With a love that shall not die  
Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment  
Book unfold!

Look from thy window and see  
My passion and my pain;  
I lie on the sands below,  
And I faint in thy disdain.  
Let the night-winds touch thy brow  
With the heat of my burnings sigh,  
And melt thee to hear the vow  
Of a love that shall not die  
Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment  
Book unfold!

My steps are nightly driven,  
By the fever in my breast,  
To hear from thy lattice breathed  
The word that shall give me rest.  
Open the door of thy heart,  
And open thy chamber door,  
And my kisses shall teach thy lips  
The love that shall fade no more  
Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment  
Book unfold!

James Bayard Taylor

# Daughter Of Egypt

DAUGHTER of Egypt, veil thine eyes!  
I cannot bear their fire;  
Nor will I touch with sacrifice  
Those altars of desire.  
For they are flames that shun the day,  
And their unholy light  
Is fed from natures gone astray  
In passion and in night.

The stars of Beauty and of Sin,  
They burn amid the dark,  
Like beacons that to ruin win  
The fascinated bark.  
Then veil their glow, lest I forswear  
The hopes thou canst not crown,  
And in the black waves of thy hair  
My struggling manhood drown!

James Bayard Taylor



## From "the Sunshine Of The Gods"

AH, moment not to be purchased,  
Not to be won by prayer,  
Not by toil to be conquered,  
But given, lest one despair,  
By the Gods in wayward kindness,  
Stay—thou art all too fair!  
Hour of the dancing measures,  
Sylph of the dew and rainbow,  
Let us clutch thy shining hair!

For the mist is blown from the mind,  
For the impotent yearning is over,  
And the wings of the thoughts have power:  
In the warmth and the glow creative  
Existence mellows and ripens,  
And a crowd of swift surprises  
Sweetens the fortunate hour;  
Till a shudder of rapture loosens  
The tears that hang on the eyelids  
Like a breeze-suspended shower,  
With a sense of heavenly freshness  
Blown from beyond the sunshine,  
And the blood, like the sap of the roses,  
Breaks into bud and flower.

'T is the Sunshine of the Gods,  
The sudden light that quickens,  
Unites the nimble forces,  
And yokes the shy expression  
To the thoughts that waited long,—  
Waiting and wooing vainly:  
But now they meet like lovers  
In the time of willing increase,  
Each warming each, and giving  
The kiss that maketh strong:  
And the mind feels fairest May-time  
In the marriage of its passions,  
For Thought is one with Speech,  
In the Sunshine of the Gods,

And Speech is one with Song!

Then a rhythmic pulse makes order  
In the troops of wandering fancies:  
Held in soft subordination,  
Lo! they follow, lead, or fly.  
The fields of their feet are endless,  
And the heights and the deeps are open  
To the glance of the equal sky;  
And the Masters sit no longer  
In inaccessible distance,  
But give to the haughtiest question,  
Smiling, a sweet reply.

James Bayard Taylor

# Gettysburg Ode

After the eyes that looked, the lips that spake  
Here, from the shadows of impending death,  
Those words of solemn breath,  
What voice may fitly break  
The silence, doubly hallowed, left by him?  
We can but bow the head, with eyes grown dim,  
And, as a Nation's litany, repeat  
The phrase his martyrdom hath made complete,  
Noble as then, but now more sadly sweet:  
'Let us, the Living, rather dedicate  
Ourselves to the unfinished work, which they  
Thus far advanced so nobly on its way,  
And saved the periled State!  
Let us, upon this field where they, the brave,  
Their last full measure of devotion gave,  
Highly resolve they have not died in vain!--  
That, under God, the Nation's later birth  
Of freedom, and the people's gain  
Of their own Sovereignty, shall never wane  
And perish from the circle of the earth!'  
From such a perfect text, shall Song aspire  
To light her faded fire,  
And into wandering music turn  
Its virtue, simple, sorrowful, and stern?  
His voice all elegies anticipated;  
For, whatso'er the strain,  
We hear that one refrain:  
'We consecrate ourselves to them, the Consecrated!'

James Bayard Taylor

# Sicilian Wine

I've drunk Sicilia's crimson wine!  
The blazing vintage pressed  
From grapes on Etna's breast,  
What time the mellowing autumn sun  
did shine:  
I've drunk the wine!  
I feel its blood divine  
Poured on the sluggish tide of mine,  
Till, kindling slow,  
Its fountains glow  
With the light that swims  
On their trembling brims,  
And a molten sunrise floods my limbs!

What do I here?  
I've drunk the wine,  
And lo! the bright blue heaven is clear  
Above the ocean's bluer sphere,  
Seen through the long arcades of pine,  
Inwoven and arched with vine!  
The glades are green below;  
The temple shines afar;  
Above, old Etna's snow  
Sparkles with many an icy star:  
I see the mountain and its marble wall,  
Where gleaming waters fall  
And voices call,  
Singing and calling  
Like chorals falling  
Through pearly doors of some Olympian hall,  
Where Love holds bacchanal.

Sicilian wine! Sicilian wine!  
Summer, and Music, and Song divine  
Are thine, — all thine!  
A sweet wind over the roses plays;  
The wild bee hums at my languid ear;  
The mute-winged moth serenely strays  
On the downy atmosphere,

Like hovering Sleep, that overweighs  
My lids with his shadow, yet comes not near.  
Who 'll share with me this languor?  
With me the juice of Etna sip?  
Who press the goblet's lip,  
Refusing mine the while with love's enchanting  
anger?  
Would I were young Adonis now!  
With what an ardor bold  
Within my arms I 'd fold  
Fair Aphrodite of Idalian mould,  
And let the locks that hide her gleaming brow  
Fall o'er my shoulder as she lay  
With the fair swell of her immortal breast  
Upon my bosom pressed,  
Giving Olympian thrills to its enamored clay!

Bacchus and Pan have fled:  
No heavy Satyr crushes with his tread  
The verdure of the meadow ground,  
But in their stead  
The Nymphs are leading a bewildering round,  
Vivid and light, as o'er some flowering rise  
A dance of butterflies,  
Their tossing hair with slender lilies crowned,  
And greener ivy than o'erran  
The brows of Bacchus and the reed of Pan!

I faint, I die:  
The flames expire,  
That made my blood a fluid fire:  
Steeped in delicious weariness I lie.  
O, lay me in some pearled shell,  
Soft-balanced on the rippling sea,  
Where sweet, cheek-kissing airs may wave  
Their fresh wings over me;  
Let me be wafted with the swell  
Of Nereid voices; let no billow rave  
To break the cool green crystal of the sea.  
For I will wander free  
Past the blue islands and the fading shores,  
To Calpe and the far Azores,

And still beyond, and wide away,  
Beneath the dazzling wings of tropic day, .  
Where, on unruffled seas,  
Sleep the green isles of the Hesperides.

The Triton's trumpet calls:

I hear, I wake, I rise:

The sound peals up the skies,

And mellowed Echo falls

In answer back from Heaven's cerulean walls.

Give me the lyre that Orpheus played upon,

Or bright Hyperion, —

Nay, rather come, thou of the mighty bow,

Come thou below,

Leaving thy steeds unharnessed go!

Sing as thou wilt, my voice shall dare to follow,

And I will sun me in thine awful glow,

Divine Apollo!

Then thou thy lute shalt twine

With Bacchic tendrils of the glorious vine

That gave Sicilian wine:

And henceforth when the breezes run

Over its clusters, ripening in the sun,

The leaves shall still be playing,

Unto thy lute its melody repaying,

And I, that quaff, shall evermore be free

To mount thy car and ride the heavens with thee!

James Bayard Taylor

# Song

DAUGHTER of Egypt, veil thine eyes!  
I cannot bear their fire;  
Nor will I touch with sacrifice  
Those altars of desire.  
For they are flames that shun the day,  
And their unholy light  
Is fed from natures gone astray  
In passion and in night.

The stars of Beauty and of Sin,  
They burn amid the dark,  
Like beacons that to ruin win  
The fascinated bark.  
Then veil their glow, lest I forswear  
The hopes thou canst not crown,  
And in the black waves of thy hair  
My struggling manhood drown!

James Bayard Taylor

# Storm Song

The clouds are scudding across the moon;  
A misty light is on the sea;  
The wind in the shrouds has a wintry tune,  
And the foam is flying free.

Brothers, a night of terror and gloom  
Speaks in the cloud and gathering roar;  
Thank God, He has given us broad sea-room,  
A thousand miles from shore.

Down with the hatches on those who sleep!  
The wild and whistling deck have we;  
Good watch, my brothers, to-night we'll keep,  
While the tempest is on the sea!

Though the rigging shriek in his terrible grip,  
And the naked spars be snapped away,  
Lashed to the helm, we'll drive our ship  
In the teeth of the whelming spray!

Hark! how the surges o'erleap the deck!  
Hark! how the pitiless tempest raves!  
Ah, daylight will look upon many a wreck  
Drifting over the desert waves.

Yet, courage, brothers! we trust the wave,  
With God above us, our guiding chart.  
So, whether to harbor or ocean-grave,  
Be it still with a cheery heart!

James Bayard Taylor



# The Cantelope

Side by side in the crowded streets,  
Amid its ebb and flow,  
We walked together one autumn morn;  
( 'Twas many years ago!)

The markets blushed with fruits and flowers;  
(Both Memory and Hope!)  
You stopped and bought me at the stall,  
A spicy cantelope.

We drained together its honeyed wine,  
We cast the seeds away;  
I slipped and fell on the moony rinds,  
And you took me home in a dray!

The honeyed wine of your love is drained;  
I limp from the fall I had;  
The snow-flakes muffle the empty stall,  
And everything is sad.

The sky is an inkstand, upside down,  
It splashes the world with gloom;  
The earth is full of skeleton bones,  
And the sea is a wobbling tomb!

James Bayard Taylor

# The Quaker Widow

THEE finds me in the garden, Hannah,—come in! 'T is kind of thee  
To wait until the Friends were gone, who came to comfort me.  
The still and quiet company a peace may give, indeed,  
But blessed is the single heart that comes to us at need.

Come, sit thee down! Here is the bench where Benjamin would sit  
On First-day afternoons in spring, and watch the swallows flit:  
He loved to smell the sprouting box, and hear the pleasant bees  
Go humming round the lilacs and through the apple-trees.

I think he loved the spring: not that he cared for flowers: most men  
Think such things foolishness,—but we were first acquainted then,  
One spring: the next he spoke his mind; the third I was his wife,  
And in the spring (it happened so) our children entered life.

He was but seventy-five; I did not think to lay him yet  
In Kennett graveyard, where at Monthly Meeting first we met.  
The Father's mercy shows in this: 't is better I should be  
Picked out to bear the heavy cross—alone in age—than he.

We 've lived together fifty years: it seems but one long day,  
One quiet Sabbath of the heart, till he was called away;  
And as we bring from Meeting-time a sweet contentment home,  
So, Hannah, I have store of peace for all the days to come.

I mind (for I can tell thee now) how hard it was to know  
If I had heard the spirit right, that told me I should go;  
For father had a deep concern upon his mind that day,  
But mother spoke for Benjamin,—she knew what best to say.

Then she was still: they sat awhile: at last she spoke again,  
"The Lord incline thee to the right!" and "Thou shalt have him, Jane!"  
My father said. I cried. Indeed, 't was not the least of shocks,  
For Benjamin was Hicksite, and father Orthodox.

I thought of this ten years ago, when daughter Ruth we lost:  
Her husband's of the world, and yet I could not see her crossed.  
She wears, thee knows, the gayest gowns, she hears a hireling priest—  
Ah, dear! the cross was ours: her life's a happy one, at least.

Perhaps she 'll wear a plainer dress when she 's as old as I,—  
Would thee believe it, Hannah? once I felt temptation nigh!  
My wedding-gown was ashen silk, too simple for my taste;  
I wanted lace around the neck, and a ribbon at the waist.

How strange it seemed to sit with him upon the women's side!  
I did not dare to lift my eyes: I felt more fear than pride,  
Till, "in the presence of the Lord," he said, and then there came  
A holy strength upon my heart, and I could say the same.

I used to blush when he came near, but then I showed no sign;  
With all the meeting looking on, I held his hand in mine.  
It seemed my bashfulness was gone, now I was his for life:  
Thee knows the feeling, Hannah,—thee too, hast been a wife.

As home we rode, I saw no fields look half so green as ours;  
The woods were coming into leaf, the meadows full of flowers;  
The neighbors met us in the lane, and every face was kind,—  
'T is strange how lively everything comes back upon my mind.

I see, as plain as thee sits there, the wedding dinner spread:  
At our own table we were guests, with father at the head;  
And Dinah Passmore helped us both,—'t was she stood up with me,  
And Abner Jones with Benjamin,—and now they 're gone, all three!

It is not right to wish for death; the Lord disposes best.  
His Spirit comes to quiet hearts, and fits them for His rest;  
And that He halved our little flock was merciful, I see:  
For Benjamin has two in heaven, and two are left with me.

Eusebius never cared to farm,—'t was not his call, in truth,  
And I must rent the dear old place, and go to daughter Ruth.  
Thee 'll say her ways are not like mine,—young people now-a-days  
Have fallen sadly off, I think, from all the good old ways.

But Ruth is still a Friend at heart; she keeps the simple tongue,  
The cheerful, kindly nature we loved when she was young;  
And it was brought upon my mind, remembering her, of late,  
That we on dress and outward things perhaps lay too much weight.

I once heard Jesse Kersey say, a spirit clothed with grace,

And pure almost as angels are, may have a homely face.  
And dress may be of less account: the Lord will look within:  
The soul it is that testifies of righteousness or sin.

Thee must n't be too hard on Ruth: she 's anxious I should go,  
And she will do her duty as a daughter should, I know.  
'T is hard to change so late in life, but we must be resigned:  
The Lord looks down contentedly upon a willing mind.

James Bayard Taylor

# The Return Of The Goddess

Not as in youth, with steps outspeeding morn,  
And cheeks all bright from rapture of the way,  
But in strange mood, half cheerful, half forlorn,  
She comes to me to-day.

Does she forget the trysts we used to keep,  
When dead leaves rustled on autumnal ground?  
Or the lone garret, whence she banished sleep  
With threats of silver sound?

Does she forget how shone the happy eyes  
When they beheld her?--how the eager tongue  
Plied its swift oar through wave-like harmonies,  
To reach her where she sung?

How at her sacred feet I cast me down?  
How she upraised me to her bosom fair,  
And from her garland shred the first light crown  
That ever pressed my hair?

Though dust is on the leaves, her breath will bring  
Their freshness back: why lingers she so long?  
The pulseless air is waiting for her wing,  
Dumb with unuttered song.

If tender doubt delay her on the road,  
Oh let her haste, to find that doubt belied!  
If shame for love unworthily bestowed,  
That shame shall melt in pride.

If she but smile, the crystal calm will break  
In music, sweeter than it ever gave,  
As when a breeze breathes o'er some sleeping lake  
And laughs in every wave.

The ripples of awakened song shall die  
Kissing her feet, and woo her not in vain,  
Until, as once, upon her breast I lie,  
Pardoned and loved again.

James Bayard Taylor

# The Song Of The Camp

"GIVE us a song!" the soldiers cried,  
The outer trenches guarding,  
When the heated guns of the camps allied  
Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,  
Lay, grim and threatening, under;  
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff  
No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said,  
"We storm the forts to-morrow;  
Sing while we may, another day  
Will bring enough of sorrow."

They lay along the battery's side,  
Below the smoking cannon:  
Brave hearts, from Severn and from Clyde,  
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame;  
Forgot was Britain's glory:  
Each heart recalled a different name,  
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,  
Until its tender passion  
Rose like an anthem, rich and strong,—  
Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,  
But, as the song grew louder,  
Something upon the soldier's cheek  
Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned  
The bloody sunset's embers,  
While the Crimean valleys learned  
How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell  
Rained on the Russian quarters,  
With scream of shot, and burst of shell,  
And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim  
For a singer, dumb and gory;  
And English Mary mourns for him  
Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers! still in honored rest  
Your truth and valor wearing:  
The bravest are the tenderest,—  
The loving are the daring.

James Bayard Taylor



# Through Baltimore

'Twas Friday morn, the train drew near  
The city and the shore!  
Far through the sunshine, soft and clear,  
We saw the dear old flags appear,  
And in our hearts arose a cheer  
For Baltimore.

Across the broad Patapsco's wave,  
Old Fort McHenry bore  
The starry banner of the brave,  
As when our fathers went to save,  
Or in the trenches find a grave,  
At Baltimore.

Before us pillared in the sky,  
We saw the statue soar  
Of Washington, serene and high -  
Could traitors view that form, nor fly?  
Could patriots see, nor gladly die  
For Baltimore?

'Oh city of our country's song,  
By that swift aid we bore  
When sorely pressed, receive the throng,  
Who go to shield our flag from wrong,  
And give us welcome, warm and strong,  
In Baltimore!'

We had no arms; as friends we came,  
As brothers evermore,  
To rally round one sacred name,  
The charter of our power and fame!  
We never dreamed of guilt and shame,  
In Baltimore.

The coward mob upon us fell!  
McHenry's flag they tore!  
Surprised, borne backward by the swell,  
Beat down with mad, inhuman yell

Before us yawned a traitorous hell  
In Baltimore!

The streets our soldier-fathers trod  
Blushed with their children's gore!  
We saw the craven rulers prod,  
And dip in blood the civic rod -  
Shall such things be, oh righteous God,  
In Baltimore?

No never! By that outrage black,  
A solemn oath we swore,  
To bring the Keystone's thousands back,  
Strike down the dastards who attack,  
And leave a red and fiery track  
Through Baltimore!

Bow down, in haste, thy guilty head!  
God's wrath is swift and sore!  
The sky with gathering bolts, is red -  
Cleanse from thy skirts the slaughter shed,  
Or make thyself an ashen bed -  
Oh Baltimore!

James Bayard Taylor

## To M. T.

THOUGH thy constant love I share,  
Yet its gift is rarer;  
In my youth I thought thee fair:  
Thou art older and fairer!

Full of more than young delight  
Now day and night are;  
For the presence, then so bright,  
Is closer, brighter.

In the haste of youth we miss  
Its best of blisses:  
Sweeter than the stolen kiss  
Are the granted kisses.

Dearer than the words that hide  
The love abiding,  
Are the words that fondly chide,  
When love needs chiding.

Higher than the perfect song  
For which love longeth,  
Is the tender fear of wrong,  
That never wrongeth.

She whom youth alone makes dear  
May awhile seem nearer:  
Thou art mine so many a year,  
The older, the dearer!

James Bayard Taylor

# Tyre

THE wild and windy morning is lit with lurid fire;  
The thundering surf of ocean beats on the rocks of Tyre, --  
Beats on the fallen columns and round the headland roars,  
And hurls its foamy volume along the hollow shores,  
And calls with hungry clamor, that speaks its long desire:  
'Where are the ships of Tarshish, the mighty ships of Tyre?'

Within her cunning harbor, choked with invading sand,  
No galleys bring their freightage, the spoils of every land,  
And like a prostrate forest, when autumn gales have blown,  
Her colonnades of granite lie shattered and o'erthrown;  
And from the reef the pharos no longer flings its fire,  
To beacon home from Tarshish the lordly ships of Tyre.

Where is thy rod of empire, once mighty on the waves, --  
Thou that thyself exalted, till Kings became thy slaves?  
Thou that didst speak to nations, and saw thy will obeyed, --  
Whose favor made them joyful, whose anger sore afraid, --  
Who laid'st thy deep foundations, and thought them strong and sure,  
And boasted midst the waters, Shall I not aye endure?

Where is the wealth of ages that heaped thy princely mart?  
The pomp of purple trappings; the gems of Syrian art;  
The silken goats of Kedar; Sabæa's spicy store;  
The tributes of the islands thy squadrons homeward bore,  
When in thy gates triumphant they entered from the sea  
With sound of horn and sackbut, of harp and psaltery?

Howl, howl, ye ships of Tarshish! the glory is laid waste:  
There is no habitation; the mansions are defaced.  
No mariners of Sidon unfurl your mighty sails;  
No workmen fell the fir-trees that grow in Shenir's vales  
And Bashan's oaks that boasted a thousand years of sun,  
Or hew the masts of cedar on frosty Lebanon.

Rise, thou forgotten harlot! take up thy harp and sing:  
Call the rebellious islands to own their ancient king:  
Bare to the spray thy bosom, and with thy hair unbound,  
Sit on the piles of ruins, thou throneless and discrowned!

There mix thy voice of wailing with the thunders of the sea,  
And sing thy songs of sorrow, that thou remembered be!

Though silent and forgotten, yet Nature still laments  
The pomp and power departed, the lost magnificence:  
The hills were proud to see thee, and they are sadder now;  
The sea was proud to bear thee, and wears a troubled brow,  
And evermore the surges chant forth their vain desire:  
'Where are the ships of Tarshish, the mighty ships of Tyre?'

James Bayard Taylor