

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Robert Southey**  
**- poems -**

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## Robert Southey(1774 - 1843)

Robert Southey was expelled from Westminster School for criticising the practice of flogging in the school magazine. This incident helped to fire his youthful revolutionary ideals, which found expression a few years later in his first long poem Joan of Arc (1796). He went to Balliol College, Oxford, but failed to gain a degree; his attention was taken up by a new friend, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and his ideas about 'pantisocracy', a scheme to set up a utopian community in America. Southey and Coleridge married two sisters, Edith and Sara Fricker. Though there was some ill-feeling over the abandonment of pantisocracy, the two men remained friends.

By this time Southey had resolved to make his living as a writer. In 1797 he was already printing the second edition of his Poems, and a trip to the Continent resulted in the publication of Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal. In this year he also began to receive an annual sum of £160 from his friend Charles Wynn; this was replaced in 1807 by a government pension for the same amount.

Southey and his family moved into Greta Hall, Keswick, in 1803, where he lived for the rest of his life. They shared the house with the Coleridges, and Southey also got to know William and Dorothy Wordsworth, who lived nearby. When Coleridge went to Malta in 1804 Southey worked extremely hard to provide for both families.

As he grew older, Southey seemed increasingly a part of the Establishment he had sought to rebel against in his pantisocratic days. Like Wordsworth and Coleridge, he became disillusioned by the progress of the French Revolution, and he was criticised as a political turncoat by the younger generation of Romantic writers, notably in Byron's Don Juan. He became Poet Laureate in 1813, a responsibility he later came to dislike.

Though he has been subject to some neglect since his death, Southey was an influential writer in his own day, and even his enemies, like Byron and Hazlitt, professed admiration for his prose style. His later years were clouded by his wife's madness and death in 1837, and his own deteriorating mental and physical health.

# A Ballad, Shewing How An Old Woman Rode Double, And Who Rode Before Her

The Raven croak'd as she sate at her meal,  
And the Old Woman knew what he said,  
And she grew pale at the Raven's tale,  
And sicken'd and went to her bed.

Now fetch me my children, and fetch them with speed,  
The Old Woman of Berkeley said,  
The monk my son, and my daughter the nun  
Bid them hasten or I shall be dead.

The monk her son, and her daughter the nun,  
Their way to Berkeley went,  
And they have brought with pious thought  
The holy sacrament.

The old Woman shriek'd as they entered her door,  
'Twas fearful her shrieks to hear,  
Now take the sacrament away  
For mercy, my children dear!

Her lip it trembled with agony,  
The sweat ran down her brow,  
I have tortures in store for evermore,  
Oh! spare me my children now!

Away they sent the sacrament,  
The fit it left her weak,  
She look'd at her children with ghastly eyes  
And faintly struggled to speak.

All kind of sin I have rioted in  
And the judgment now must be,  
But I secured my childrens souls,  
Oh! pray my children for me.

I have suck'd the breath of sleeping babes,  
The fiends have been my slaves,

I have noited myself with infants fat,  
And feasted on rifled graves.

And the fiend will fetch me now in fire  
My witchcrafts to atone,  
And I who have rifled the dead man's grave  
Shall never have rest in my own.

Bless I intreat my winding sheet  
My children I beg of you!  
And with holy water sprinkle my shroud  
And sprinkle my coffin too.

And let me be chain'd in my coffin of stone  
And fasten it strong I implore  
With iron bars, and let it be chain'd  
With three chains to the church floor.

And bless the chains and sprinkle them,  
And let fifty priests stand round,  
Who night and day the mass may say  
Where I lie on the ground.

And let fifty choristers be there  
The funeral dirge to sing,  
Who day and night by the taper's light  
Their aid to me may bring.

Let the church bells all both great and small  
Be toll'd by night and day,  
To drive from thence the fiends who come  
To bear my corpse away.

And ever have the church door barr'd  
After the even song,  
And I beseech you children dear  
Let the bars and bolts be strong.

And let this be three days and nights  
My wretched corpse to save,  
Preserve me so long from the fiendish throng  
And then I may rest in my grave.

The Old Woman of Berkeley laid her down  
And her eyes grew deadly dim,  
Short came her breath and the struggle of death  
Did loosen every limb.

They blest the old woman's winding sheet  
With rites and prayers as due,  
With holy water they sprinkled her shroud  
And they sprinkled her coffin too.

And they chain'd her in her coffin of stone  
And with iron barr'd it down,  
And in the church with three strong chains  
They chain'd it to the ground.

And they blest the chains and sprinkled them,  
And fifty priests stood round,  
By night and day the mass to say  
Where she lay on the ground.

And fifty choristers were there  
To sing the funeral song,  
And a hallowed taper blazed in the hand  
Of all the sacred throng.

To see the priests and choristers  
It was a goodly sight,  
Each holding, as it were a staff,  
A taper burning bright.

And the church bells all both great and small  
Did toll so loud and long,  
And they have barr'd the church door hard  
After the even song.

And the first night the taper's light  
Burnt steadily and clear.  
But they without a hideous rout  
Of angry fiends could hear;

A hideous roar at the church door

Like a long thunder peal,  
And the priests they pray'd and the choristers sung  
Louder in fearful zeal.

Loud toll'd the bell, the priests pray'd well,  
The tapers they burnt bright,  
The monk her son, and her daughter the nun  
They told their beads all night.

The cock he crew, away they flew  
The fiends from the herald of day,  
And undisturb'd the choristers sing  
And the fifty priests they pray.

The second night the taper's light  
Burnt dimly and blue,  
And every one saw his neighbour's face  
Like a dead man's face to view.

And yells and cries without arise  
That the stoutest heart might shock,  
And a deafening roaring like a cataract pouring  
Over a mountain rock.

The monk and nun they told their beads  
As fast as they could tell,  
And aye as louder grew the noise  
The faster went the bell.

Louder and louder the choristers sung  
As they trembled more and more,  
And the fifty priests prayed to heaven for aid,  
They never had prayed so before.

The cock he crew, away they flew  
The fiends from the herald of day,  
And undisturb'd the choristers sing  
And the fifty priests they pray.

The third night came and the tapers flame  
A hideous stench did make,  
And they burnt as though they had been dipt

In the burning brimstone lake.

And the loud commotion, like the rushing of ocean,  
Grew momentarily more and more,  
And strokes as of a battering ram  
Did shake the strong church door.

The bellmen they for very fear  
Could toll the bell no longer,  
And still as louder grew the strokes  
Their fear it grew the stronger.

The monk and nun forgot their beads,  
They fell on the ground dismay'd,  
There was not a single saint in heaven  
Whom they did not call to aid.

And the choristers song that late was so strong  
Grew a quaver of consternation,  
For the church did rock as an earthquake shock  
Uplifted its foundation.

And a sound was heard like the trumpet's blast  
That shall one day wake the dead,  
The strong church door could bear no more  
And the bolts and the bars they fled.

And the taper's light was extinguish'd quite,  
And the choristers faintly sung,  
And the priests dismay'd, panted and prayed  
Till fear froze every tongue.

And in He came with eyes of flame  
The Fiend to fetch the dead,  
And all the church with his presence glowed  
Like a fiery furnace red.

He laid his hand on the iron chains  
And like flax they moulder'd asunder,  
And the coffin lid that was barr'd so firm  
He burst with his voice of thunder.

And he bade the Old Woman of Berkeley rise  
And come with her master away,  
And the cold sweat stood on the cold cold corpse,  
At the voice she was forced to obey.

She rose on her feet in her winding sheet,  
Her dead flesh quivered with fear,  
And a groan like that which the Old Woman gave  
Never did mortal hear.

She followed the fiend to the church door,  
There stood a black horse there,  
His breath was red like furnace smoke,  
His eyes like a meteor's glare.

The fiendish force flung her on the horse  
And he leapt up before,  
And away like the lightning's speed they went  
And she was seen no more.

They saw her no more, but her cries and shrieks  
For four miles round they could hear,  
And children at rest at their mother's breast,  
Started and screamed with fear.

Robert Southey



# After Blenheim

It was a summer evening,  
Old Kaspar's work was done,  
And he before his cottage door  
Was sitting in the sun,  
And by him sported on the green  
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin  
Roll something large and round,  
Which he beside the rivulet  
In playing there had found;  
He came to ask what he had found,  
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,  
Who stood expectant by;  
And then the old man shook his head,  
And, with a natural sigh,  
'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,  
'Who fell in the great victory.

'I find them in the garden,  
For there's many here about;  
And often when I go to plough,  
The ploughshare turns them out!  
For many thousand men,' said he,  
'Were slain in that great victory.'

'Now tell us what 'twas all about,'  
Young Peterkin, he cries;  
And little Wilhelmine looks up  
With wonder-waiting eyes;  
'Now tell us all about the war,  
And what they fought each other for.'

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,  
'Who put the French to rout;  
But what they fought each other for,  
I could not well make out;

But everybody said,' quoth he,  
'That 'twas a famous victory.

'My father lived at Blenheim then,  
Yon little stream hard by;  
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,  
And he was forced to fly;  
So with his wife and child he fled,  
Nor had he where to rest his head.

'With fire and sword the country round  
Was wasted far and wide,  
And many a childing mother then,  
And new-born baby died;  
But things like that, you know, must be  
At every famous victory.

'They say it was a shocking sight  
After the field was won;  
For many thousand bodies here  
Lay rotting in the sun;  
But things like that, you know, must be  
After a famous victory.

'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,  
And our good Prince Eugene.'  
'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!'  
Said little Wilhelmine.  
'Nay... nay... my little girl,' quoth he,  
'It was a famous victory.

'And everybody praised the Duke  
Who this great fight did win.'  
'But what good came of it at last?'  
Quoth little Peterkin.  
'Why that I cannot tell,' said he,  
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

Robert Southey

# Ariste

Let ancient stories round the painter's art,  
Who stole from many a maid his Venus' charms,  
Till warm devotion fired each gazer's heart  
And every bosom bounded with alarms.  
He culled the beauties of his native isle,  
From some the blush of beauty's vermeil dyes,  
From some the lovely look, the winning smile,  
From some the languid lustre of the eyes.

Low to the finished form the nations round  
In adoration bent the pious knee;  
With myrtle wreaths the artist's brow they crowned,  
Whose skill, Ariste, only imaged thee.  
Ill-fated artist, doomed so wide to seek  
The charms that blossom on Ariste's cheek!

Robert Southey

# Birth-Day Ode 01

O my faithful Friend!  
O early chosen, ever found the same,  
And trusted and beloved! once more the verse  
Long destin'd, always obvious to thine ear,  
Attend indulgent.

Robert Southey

## Birth-Day Ode 02

Small is the new-born plant scarce seen  
Amid the soft encircling green,  
Where yonder budding acorn rears,  
Just o'er the waving grass, its tender head:  
Slow pass along the train of years,  
And on the growing plant, their dews and showers they shed.  
Anon it rears aloft its giant form,  
And spreads its broad-brown arms to meet the storm.  
Beneath its boughs far shadowing o'er the plain,  
From summer suns, repair the grateful village train.

Nor BEDFORD will my friend survey  
The book of Nature with unheeding eye;  
For never beams the rising orb of day,  
For never dimly dies the refluent ray,  
But as the moralizer marks the sky,  
He broods with strange delight upon futurity.

And we must muse my friend! maturer years  
Arise, and other Hopes and other Fears,  
For we have past the pleasant plains of Youth.  
Oh pleasant plains! that we might stray  
For ever o'er your faery ground--  
For ever roam your vales around,  
Nor onward tempt the dangerous way--  
For oh--what numerous foes assail  
The Traveller, from that chearful vale!

With toil and heaviness opprest  
Seek not the flowery bank for rest,  
Tho' there the bowering woodbine spread  
Its fragrant shelter o'er thy head,  
Tho' Zephyr there should linger long  
To hear the sky-lark's wildly-warbled song,  
There heedless Youth shalt thou awake  
The vengeance of the coiling snake!

Tho' fairly smiles the vernal mead  
To tempt thy pilgrim feet, proceed

Hold on thy steady course aright,  
Else shalt thou wandering o'er the pathless plain,  
When damp and dark descends the night  
Shivering and shelterless, repent in vain.

And yet--tho' Dangers lurk on every side  
Receive not **WORLDLY WISDOM** for thy guide!  
Beneath his care thou wilt not know  
The throb of unavailing woe,  
No tear shall tremble in thine eye  
Thy breast shall struggle with no sigh,  
He will security impart,  
But he will apathize thy heart!

Ah no!  
Fly Fly that fatal foe,  
Virtue shall shrink from his torpedo grasp--  
For not more fatal thro' the Wretches veins  
Benumb'd in Death's cold pains  
Creeps the chill poison of the deadly asp.

Serenity joys my friend await  
Maturer manhood's steady state.  
The wild brook bursting from its source  
Meanders on its early course,  
Delighting there with winding way  
Amid the vernal vale to stray,  
Emerging thence more widely spread  
It foams along its craggy bed,  
And shatter'd with the mighty shock  
Rushes from the giddy rock--  
Hurl'd headlong o'er the dangerous steep  
On runs the current to the deep,  
    And gathering waters as it goes  
    Serene and calm the river flows,  
    Diffuses plenty o'er the smiling coast,  
Rolls on its stately waves and is in ocean lost.

Robert Southey

## Birth-Day Ode 03

And wouldst thou seek the low abode  
Where PEACE delights to dwell?  
Pause Traveller on thy way of life!  
With many a snare and peril rife  
Is that long labyrinth of road:  
Dark is the vale of years before  
Pause Traveller on thy way!  
Nor dare the dangerous path explore  
Till old EXPERIENCE comes to lend his leading ray.

Not he who comes with lanthorn light  
Shall guide thy groping pace aright  
With faltering feet and slow;  
No! let him rear the torch on high  
And every maze shall meet thine eye,  
And every snare and every foe;  
Then with steady step and strong,  
Traveller, shalt thou march along.

Tho' POWER invite thee to her hall,  
Regard not thou her tempting call  
Her splendors meteor glare;  
Tho' courteous Flattery there await  
And Wealth adorn the dome of State,  
There stalks the midnight spectre CARE;  
PEACE, Traveller! does not sojourn there.

If FAME allure thee, climb not thou  
To that steep mountain's craggy brow  
Where stands her stately pile;  
For far from thence does PEACE abide,  
And thou shall find FAME'S favouring smile  
Cold as the feeble Sun on Heclas snow-clad side,

And Traveller! as thou hopest to find  
That low and loved abode,  
Retire thee from the thronging road  
And shun the mob of human kind.  
Ah I hear how old EXPERIENCE schools,

"Fly fly the crowd of Knaves and Fools  
"And thou shalt fly from woe;  
"The one thy heedless heart will greet  
"With Judas smile, and thou wilt meet  
"In every Fool a Foe!"

So safely mayest thou pass from these,  
And reach secure the home of PEACE,  
And FRIENDSHIP find thee there.  
No happier state can mortal know,  
No happier lot can Earth bestow  
If LOVE thy lot shall share.  
Yet still CONTENT with him may dwell  
Whom HYMEN will not bless,  
And VIRTUE sojourn in the cell  
Of HERMIT HAPPINESS.

Robert Southey



## Botany Bay Eclogues 02 - Elinor

(Time, Morning. Scene, the Shore.)

Once more to daily toil--once more to wear  
The weeds of infamy--from every joy  
The heart can feel excluded, I arise  
Worn out and faint with unremitting woe;  
And once again with wearied steps I trace  
The hollow-sounding shore. The swelling waves  
Gleam to the morning sun, and dazzle o'er  
With many a splendid hue the breezy strand.  
Oh there was once a time when ELINOR  
Gazed on thy opening beam with joyous eye  
Undimm'd by guilt and grief! when her full soul  
Felt thy mild radiance, and the rising day  
Waked but to pleasure! on thy sea-girt verge  
Oft England! have my evening steps stole on,  
Oft have mine eyes surveyed the blue expanse,  
And mark'd the wild wind swell the ruffled surge,  
And seen the upheaved billows bosomed rage  
Rush on the rock; and then my timid soul  
Shrunk at the perils of the boundless deep,  
And heaved a sigh for suffering mariners.  
Ah! little deeming I myself was doom'd.  
To tempt the perils of the boundless deep,  
An Outcast--unbeloved and unbewail'd.

Why stern Remembrance! must thine iron hand  
Harrow my soul? why calls thy cruel power  
The fields of England to my exil'd eyes,  
The joys which once were mine? even now I see  
The lowly lovely dwelling! even now  
Behold the woodbine clasping its white walls  
And hear the fearless red-breasts chirp around  
To ask their morning meal!--for I was wont  
With friendly band to give their morning meal,  
Was wont to love their song, when lingering morn  
Streak'd o'er the chilly landskip the dim light,  
And thro' the open'd lattice hung my head  
To view the snow-drop's bud: and thence at eve

When mildly fading sunk the summer sun,  
Oft have I loved to mark the rook's slow course  
And hear his hollow croak, what time he sought  
The church-yard elm, whose wide-embowering boughs  
Full foliated, half conceal'd the house of God.  
There, my dead father! often have I heard  
Thy hallowed voice explain the wonderous works  
Of Heaven to sinful man. Ah! little deem'd  
Thy virtuous bosom, that thy shameless child  
So soon should spurn the lesson! sink the slave  
Of Vice and Infamy! the hireling prey  
Of brutal appetite! at length worn out  
With famine, and the avenging scourge of guilt,  
Should dare dishonesty--yet dread to die!

Welcome ye savage lands, ye barbarous climes,  
Where angry England sends her outcast sons--  
I hail your joyless shores! my weary bark  
Long tempest-tost on Life's inclement sea,  
Here hails her haven! welcomes the drear scene,  
The marshy plain, the briar-entangled wood,  
And all the perils of a world unknown.  
For Elinor has nothing new to fear  
From fickle Fortune! all her rankling shafts  
Barb'd with disgrace, and venom'd with disease.  
Have pierced my bosom, and the dart of death  
Has lost its terrors to a wretch like me.

Welcome ye marshy heaths! ye pathless woods,  
Where the rude native rests his wearied frame  
Beneath the sheltering shade; where, when the storm,  
As rough and bleak it rolls along the sky,  
Benumbs his naked limbs, he flies to seek  
The dripping shelter. Welcome ye wild plains  
Unbroken by the plough, undelv'd by hand  
Of patient rustic; where for lowing herds,  
And for the music of the bleating flocks,  
Alone is heard the kangaroo's sad note  
Deepening in distance. Welcome ye rude climes,  
The realm of Nature! for as yet unknown  
The crimes and comforts of luxurious life,  
Nature benignly gives to all enough,

Denies to all a superfluity,  
What tho' the garb of infamy I wear,  
Tho' day by day along the echoing beach  
I cull the wave-worn shells, yet day by day  
I earn in honesty my frugal food,  
And lay me down at night to calm repose.  
No more condemn'd the mercenary tool  
Of brutal lust, while heaves the indignant heart  
With Virtue's stifled sigh, to fold my arms  
Round the rank felon, and for daily bread  
To hug contagion to my poison'd breast;  
On these wild shores Repentance' saviour hand  
Shall probe my secret soul, shall cleanse its wounds  
And fit the faithful penitent for Heaven.

Robert Southey

# Botany Bay Eclogues 03 - Humphrey And William

(Time, Noon.)

HUMPHREY:

See'st thou not William that the scorching Sun  
By this time half his daily race has run?  
The savage thrusts his light canoe to shore  
And hurries homeward with his fishy store.  
Suppose we leave awhile this stubborn soil  
To eat our dinner and to rest from toil!

WILLIAM:

Agreed. Yon tree whose purple gum bestows  
A ready medicine for the sick-man's woes,  
Forms with its shadowy boughs a cool retreat  
To shield us from the noontide's sultry heat.  
Ah Humphrey! now upon old England's shore  
The weary labourer's morning work is o'er:  
The woodman now rests from his measur'd stroke  
Flings down his axe and sits beneath the oak,  
Savour'd with hunger there he eats his food,  
There drinks the cooling streamlet of the wood.  
To us no cooling streamlet winds its way,  
No joys domestic crown for us the day,  
The felon's name, the outcast's garb we wear,  
Toil all the day, and all the night despair.

HUMPHREY:

Ah William! labouring up the furrowed ground  
I used to love the village clock's dull sound,  
Rejoice to hear my morning toil was done,  
And trudge it homewards when the clock went one.  
'Twas ere I turn'd a soldier and a sinner!  
Pshaw! curse this whining--let us fall to dinner.

WILLIAM:

I too have loved this hour, nor yet forgot  
Each joy domestic of my little cot.  
For at this hour my wife with watchful care  
Was wont each humbler dainty to prepare,  
The keenest sauce by hunger was supplied  
And my poor children prattled at my side.  
Methinks I see the old oak table spread,  
The clean white trencher and the good brown bread,  
The cheese my daily food which Mary made,  
For Mary knew full well the housewife's trade:  
The jug of cyder,--cyder I could make,  
And then the knives--I won 'em at the wake.  
Another has them now! I toiling here  
Look backward like a child and drop a tear.

HUMPHREY:

I love a dismal story, tell me thine,  
Meantime, good Will, I'll listen as I dine.  
I too my friend can tell a piteous story  
When I turn'd hero how I purchas'd glory.

WILLIAM:

But Humphrey, sure thou never canst have known  
The comforts of a little home thine own:  
A home so snug, So chearful too as mine,  
'Twas always clean, and we could make it fine;  
For there King Charles's golden rules were seen,  
And there--God bless 'em both--the King and Queen.  
The pewter plates our garnish'd chimney grace  
So nicely scour'd, you might have seen your face;  
And over all, to frighten thieves, was hung  
Well clean'd, altho' but seldom us'd, my gun.  
Ah! that damn'd gun! I took it down one morn--  
A desperate deal of harm they did my corn!

Our testy Squire too loved to save the breed,  
So covey upon covey eat my seed.  
I mark'd the mischievous rogues, and took my aim,  
I fir'd, they fell, and--up the keeper came.  
That cursed morning brought on my undoing,  
I went to prison and my farm to ruin.  
Poor Mary! for her grave the parish paid,  
No tomb-stone tells where her cold corpse is laid!  
My children--my dear boys--

HUMPHREY:

                  Come--Grief is dry--  
You to your dinner--to my story I.  
To you my friend who happier days have known  
And each calm comfort of a home your own,  
This is bad living: I have spent my life  
In hardest toil and unavailing strife,  
And here (from forest ambush safe at least)  
To me this scanty pittance seems a feast.  
I was a plough-boy once; as free from woes  
And blithesome as the lark with whom I rose.  
Each evening at return a meal I found  
And, tho' my bed was hard, my sleep was sound.  
One Whitsuntide, to go to fair, I drest  
Like a great bumkin in my Sunday's best;  
A primrose posey in my hat I stuck  
And to the revel went to try my luck.  
From show to show, from booth to booth I stray,  
See stare and wonder all the live-long day.  
A Serjeant to the fair recruiting came  
Skill'd in man-catching to beat up for game;  
Our booth he enter'd and sat down by me;--  
Methinks even now the very scene I see!  
The canvass roof, the hogshead's running store,  
The old blind fiddler seated next the door,  
The frothy tankard passing to and fro  
And the rude rabble round the puppet-show;  
The Serjeant eyed me well--the punch-bowl comes,  
And as we laugh'd and drank, up struck the drums--  
And now he gives a bumper to his Wench--

God save the King, and then--God damn the French.  
 Then tells the story of his last campaign.  
 How many wounded and how many slain,  
 Flags flying, cannons roaring, drums a-beating,  
 The English marching on, the French retreating,--  
 "Push on--push on my lads! they fly before ye,  
 "March on to riches, happiness and glory!"  
 At first I wonder'd, by degrees grew bolder,  
 Then cried--"tis a fine thing to be a soldier!"  
 "Aye Humphrey!" says the Serjeant--"that's your name?  
 "'Tis a fine thing to fight the French for fame!  
 "March to the field--knock out a Mounseer's brains  
 "And pick the scoundrel's pocket for your pains.  
 "Come Humphrey come! thou art a lad of spirit!  
 "Rise to a halbert--as I did--by merit!  
 "Would'st thou believe it? even I was once  
 "As thou art now, a plough-boy and a dunce;  
 "But Courage rais'd me to my rank. How now boy!  
 "Shall Hero Humphrey still be Numps the plough-boy?  
 "A proper shaped young fellow! tall and straight!  
 "Why thou wert made for glory! five feet eight!  
 "The road to riches is the field of fight,--  
 "Didst ever see a guinea look so bright?  
 "Why regimentals Numps would give thee grace,  
 "A hat and feather would become that face;  
 "The girls would crowd around thee to be kist--  
 "Dost love a girl?" "Od Zounds!" I cried "I'll list!"  
 So past the night: anon the morning came,  
 And off I set a volunteer for fame.  
 "Back shoulders, turn out your toes, hold up your head,  
 "Stand easy!" so I did--till almost dead.  
 Oh how I long'd to tend the plough again  
 Trudge up the field and whistle o'er the plain,  
 When tir'd and sore amid the piteous throng  
 Hungry and cold and wet I limp'd along,  
 And growing fainter as I pass'd and colder,  
 Curs'd that ill hour when I became a soldier!  
 In town I found the hours more gayly pass  
 And Time fled swiftly with my girl and glass;  
 The girls were wonderous kind and wonderous fair,  
 They soon transferred me to the Doctor's care,  
 The Doctor undertook to cure the evil,

And he almost transferred me to the Devil.  
'Twere tedious to relate the dismal story  
Of fighting, fasting, wretchedness and glory.  
At last discharg'd, to England's shores I came  
Paid for my wounds with want instead of fame,  
Found my fair friends and plunder'd as they bade me,  
They kist me, coax'd me, robb'd me and betray'd me.  
Tried and condemn'd his Majesty transports me,  
And here in peace, I thank him, he supports me,  
So ends my dismal and heroic story  
And Humphrey gets more good from guilt than glory.

Robert Southey



# Botany Bay Eclogues 05 - Frederic

(Time Night. Scene the woods.)

Where shall I turn me? whither shall I bend  
My weary way? thus worn with toil and faint  
How thro' the thorny mazes of this wood  
Attain my distant dwelling? that deep cry  
That rings along the forest seems to sound  
My parting knell: it is the midnight howl  
Of hungry monsters prowling for their prey!  
Again! oh save me--save me gracious Heaven!  
I am not fit to die!

Thou coward wretch

Why heaves thy trembling heart? why shake thy limbs  
Beneath their palsied burden? is there ought  
So lovely in existence? would'st thou drain  
Even to its dregs the bitter draught of life?  
Dash down the loathly bowl! poor outcast slave  
Stamp'd with the brand of Vice and Infamy  
Why should the villain Frederic shrink from Death?

Death! where the magic in that empty name  
That chills my inmost heart? why at the thought  
Starts the cold dew of fear on every limb?  
There are no terrors to surround the Grave,  
When the calm Mind collected in itself  
Surveys that narrow house: the ghastly train  
That haunt the midnight of delirious Guilt  
Then vanish; in that home of endless rest  
All sorrows cease.--Would I might slumber there!

Why then this panting of the fearful heart?  
This miser love of Life that dreads to lose  
Its cherish'd torment? shall the diseased man  
Yield up his members to the surgeon's knife,  
Doubtful of succour, but to ease his frame  
Of fleshly anguish, and the coward wretch,  
Whose ulcered soul can know no human help  
Shrink from the best Physician's certain aid?

Oh it were better far to lay me down  
Here on this cold damp earth, till some wild beast  
Seize on his willing victim!

If to die

Were all, it were most sweet to rest my head  
On the cold clod, and sleep the sleep of Death.  
But if the Archangel's trump at the last hour  
Startle the ear of Death and wake the soul  
To frenzy!--dreams of infancy! fit tales  
For garrulous beldames to affrighten babes!  
I have been guilty, yet my mind can bear  
The retrospect of guilt, yet in the hour  
Of deep contrition to THE ETERNAL look  
For mercy! for the child of Poverty,  
And "disinherited of happiness,"

What if I warr'd upon the world? the world  
Had wrong'd me first: I had endur'd the ills  
Of hard injustice; all this goodly earth  
Was but to me one wild waste wilderness;  
I had no share in Nature's patrimony,  
Blasted were all my morning hopes of Youth,  
Dark DISAPPOINTMENT follow'd on my ways,  
CARE was my bosom inmate, and keen WANT  
Gnaw'd at my heart. ETERNAL ONE thou know'st  
How that poor heart even in the bitter hour  
Of lowdest revelry has inly yearn'd  
For peace!

My FATHER! I will call on thee,  
Pour to thy mercy seat my earnest prayer,  
And wait thy peace in bowedness of soul.  
Oh thoughts of comfort! how the afflicted heart,  
Tired with the tempest of its passions, rests  
On you with holy hope! the hollow howl  
Of yonder harmless tenant of the woods  
Bursts not with terror on the sober'd sense.  
If I have sinn'd against mankind, on them  
Be that past sin; they made me what I was.  
In these extremest climes can Want no more  
Urge to the deeds of darkness, and at length

Here shall I rest. What tho' my hut be poor--  
The rains descend not thro' its humble roof:  
Would I were there again! the night is cold;  
And what if in my wanderings I should rouse  
The savage from his thicket!

Hark! the gun!

And lo--the fire of safety! I shall reach  
My little hut again! again by toil  
Force from the stubborn earth my sustenance,  
And quick-ear'd guilt will never start alarm'd  
Amid the well-earn'd meal. This felon's garb--  
Will it not shield me from the winds of Heaven?  
And what could purple more? Oh strengthen me  
Eternal One in this serener state!  
Cleanse thou mine heart, so PENITENCE and FAITH  
Shall heal my soul and my last days be peace.

Robert Southey

# Donica - A Ballad

Author Note: In Finland there is a Castle which is called the New Rock, moated about with a river of unfounded depth, the water black and the fish therein very distateful to the palate. In this are spectres often seen, which foreshew either the death of the Governor, or some prime officer belonging to the place; and most commonly it appeareth in the shape of an harper, sweetly singing and dallying and playing under the water.

It is reported of one Donica, that after she was dead, the Devil walked in her body for the space of two years, so that none suspected but that she was still alive; for she did both speak and eat, though very sparingly; only she had a deep paleness on her countenance, which was the only sign of death. At length a Magician coming by where she was then in the company of many other virgins, as soon as he beheld her he said, "fair Maids, why keep you company with the dead Virgin whom you suppose to be alive?" when taking away the magic charm which was tied under her arm, the body fell down lifeless and without motion.

The following Ballad is founded on these stories. They are to be found in the notes to *The Hierarchies of the blessed Angels*; a Poem by Thomas Heywood, printed in folio by Adam Islip, 1635.

.....

High on a rock, whose castled shade  
Darken'd the lake below,  
In ancient strength majestic stood  
The towers of Arlinkow.

The fisher in the lake below  
Durst never cast his net,  
Nor ever swallow in its waves  
Her passing wings would wet.

The cattle from its ominous banks  
In wild alarm would run,  
Tho' parched with thirst and faint beneath  
The summer's scorching sun.

For sometimes when no passing breeze

The long lank sedges waved,  
All white with foam and heaving high  
Its deafening billows raved;

And when the tempest from its base  
The rooted pine would shake,  
The powerless storm unruffling swept  
Across the calm dead lake.

And ever then when Death drew near  
The house of Arlinkow,  
Its dark unfathom'd depths did send  
Strange music from below.

The Lord of Arlinkow was old,  
One only child had he,  
Donica was the Maiden's name  
As fair as fair might be.

A bloom as bright as opening morn  
Flush'd o'er her clear white cheek,  
The music of her voice was mild,  
Her full dark eyes were meek.

Far was her beauty known, for none  
So fair could Finland boast,  
Her parents loved the Maiden much,  
Young EBERHARD loved her most.

Together did they hope to tread  
The pleasant path of life,  
For now the day drew near to make  
Donica Eberhard's wife.

The eve was fair and mild the air,  
Along the lake they stray;  
The eastern hill reflected bright  
The fading tints of day.

And brightly o'er the water stream'd  
The liquid radiance wide;  
Donica's little dog ran on

And gambol'd at her side.

Youth, Health, and Love bloom'd on her cheek,  
Her full dark eyes express  
In many a glance to Eberhard  
Her soul's meek tenderness.

Nor sound was heard, nor passing gale  
Sigh'd thro' the long lank sedge,  
The air was hushed, no little wave  
Dimpled the water's edge.

Sudden the unfathom'd lake sent forth  
Strange music from beneath,  
And slowly o'er the waters sail'd  
The solemn sounds of Death.

As the deep sounds of Death arose,  
Donica's cheek grew pale,  
And in the arms of Eberhard  
The senseless Maiden fell.

Loudly the youth in terror shriek'd,  
And loud he call'd for aid,  
And with a wild and eager look  
Gaz'd on the death-pale Maid.

But soon again did better thoughts  
In Eberhard arise,  
And he with trembling hope beheld  
The Maiden raise her eyes.

And on his arm reclin'd she moved  
With feeble pace and slow,  
And soon with strength recover'd reach'd

Yet never to Donica's cheek  
Return'd the lively hue,  
Her cheeks were deathly, white, and wan,  
Her lips a livid blue.

Her eyes so bright and black of yore

Were now more black and bright,  
And beam'd strange lustre in her face  
So deadly wan and white.

The dog that gambol'd by her side,  
And lov'd with her to stray,  
Now at his alter'd mistress howl'd  
And fled in fear away.

Yet did the faithful Eberhard  
Not love the Maid the less;  
He gaz'd with sorrow, but he gaz'd  
With deeper tenderness.

And when he found her health unharm'd  
He would not brook delay,  
But press'd the not unwilling Maid  
To fix the bridal day.

And when at length it came, with joy  
They hail'd the bridal day,  
And onward to the house of God  
They went their willing way.

And as they at the altar stood  
And heard the sacred rite,  
The hallowed tapers dimly stream'd  
A pale sulphureous light.

And as the Youth with holy warmth  
Her hand in his did hold,  
Sudden he felt Donica's hand  
Grow deadly damp and cold.

And loudly did he shriek, for lo!  
A Spirit met his view,  
And Eberhard in the angel form  
His own Donica knew.

That instant from her earthly frame  
Howling the Daemon fled,  
And at the side of Eberhard

The livid form fell dead.

Robert Southey



# English Eclogues I - The Old Mansion-House

STRANGER.

Old friend! why you seem bent on parish duty,  
Breaking the highway stones,--and 'tis a task  
Somewhat too hard methinks for age like yours.

OLD MAN.

Why yes! for one with such a weight of years  
Upon his back. I've lived here, man and boy,  
In this same parish, near the age of man  
For I am hard upon threescore and ten.  
I can remember sixty years ago  
The beautifying of this mansion here  
When my late Lady's father, the old Squire  
Came to the estate.

STRANGER.

Why then you have outlasted  
All his improvements, for you see they're making  
Great alterations here.

OLD MAN.

Aye-great indeed!  
And if my poor old Lady could rise up--  
God rest her soul! 'twould grieve her to behold  
The wicked work is here.

STRANGER.

They've set about it  
In right good earnest. All the front is gone,  
Here's to be turf they tell me, and a road  
Round to the door. There were some yew trees too  
Stood in the court.

OLD MAN.

Aye Master! fine old trees!  
My grandfather could just remember back  
When they were planted there. It was my task  
To keep them trimm'd, and 'twas a pleasure to me!  
All strait and smooth, and like a great green wall!  
My poor old Lady many a time would come  
And tell me where to shear, for she had played  
In childhood under them, and 'twas her pride  
To keep them in their beauty. Plague I say  
On their new-fangled whimsies! we shall have  
A modern shrubbery here stuck full of firs  
And your pert poplar trees;--I could as soon  
Have plough'd my father's grave as cut them down!

STRANGER.

But 'twill be lighter and more chearful now,  
A fine smooth turf, and with a gravel road  
Round for the carriage,--now it suits my taste.  
I like a shrubbery too, it looks so fresh,  
And then there's some variety about it.  
In spring the lilac and the gueldres rose,  
And the laburnum with its golden flowers  
Waving in the wind. And when the autumn comes  
The bright red berries of the mountain ash,  
With firs enough in winter to look green,  
And show that something lives. Sure this is better  
Than a great hedge of yew that makes it look  
All the year round like winter, and for ever  
Dropping its poisonous leaves from the under boughs  
So dry and bare!

OLD MAN.

Ah! so the new Squire thinks  
And pretty work he makes of it! what 'tis  
To have a stranger come to an old house!

STRANGER.

It seems you know him not?

OLD MAN.

No Sir, not I.

They tell me he's expected daily now,  
But in my Lady's time he never came  
But once, for they were very distant kin.  
If he had played about here when a child  
In that fore court, and eat the yew-berries,  
And sat in the porch threading the jessamine flowers,  
That fell so thick, he had not had the heart  
To mar all thus.

STRANGER.

Come--come! all a not wrong.  
Those old dark windows--

OLD MAN.

They're demolish'd too--  
As if he could not see thro' casement glass!  
The very red-breasts that so regular  
Came to my Lady for her morning crumbs,  
Won't know the window now!

STRANGER.

Nay they were high  
And then so darken'd up with jessamine,  
Harbouring the vermine;--that was a fine tree  
However. Did it not grow in and line  
The porch?

OLD MAN.

All over it: it did one good  
To pass within ten yards when 'twas in blossom.  
There was a sweet-briar too that grew beside.  
My Lady loved at evening to sit there  
And knit; and her old dog lay at her feet  
And slept in the sun; 'twas an old favourite dog

She did not love him less that he was old  
And feeble, and he always had a place  
By the fire-side, and when he died at last  
She made me dig a grave in the garden for him.  
Ah I she was good to all! a woful day  
'Twas for the poor when to her grave she went!

STRANGER.

They lost a friend then?

OLD MAN.

You're a stranger here  
Or would not ask that question. Were they sick?  
She had rare cordial waters, and for herbs  
She could have taught the Doctors. Then at winter  
When weekly she distributed the bread  
In the poor old porch, to see her and to hear  
The blessings on her! and I warrant them  
They were a blessing to her when her wealth  
Had been no comfort else. At Christmas, Sir!  
It would have warm'd your heart if you had seen  
Her Christmas kitchen,--how the blazing fire  
Made her fine pewter shine, and holly boughs  
So chearful red,--and as for misseltoe,  
The finest bough that grew in the country round  
Was mark'd for Madam. Then her old ale went  
So bountiful about! a Christmas cask,  
And 'twas a noble one! God help me Sir!  
But I shall never see such days again.

STRANGER.

Things may be better yet than you suppose  
And you should hope the best.

OLD MAN.

It don't look well  
These alterations Sir! I'm an old man  
And love the good old fashions; we don't find

Old bounty in new houses. They've destroyed  
All that my Lady loved; her favourite walk  
Grubb'd up, and they do say that the great row  
Of elms behind the house, that meet a-top  
They must fall too. Well! well! I did not think  
To live to see all this, and 'tis perhaps  
A comfort I shan't live to see it long.

STRANGER.

But sure all changes are not needs for the worse  
My friend.

OLD MAN.

May-hap they mayn't Sir;--for all that  
I like what I've been us'd to. I remember  
All this from a child up, and now to lose it,  
'Tis losing an old friend. There's nothing left  
As 'twas;--I go abroad and only meet  
With men whose fathers I remember boys;  
The brook that used to run before my door  
That's gone to the great pond; the trees I learnt  
To climb are down; and I see nothing now  
That tells me of old times, except the stones  
In the church-yard. You are young Sir and I hope  
Have many years in store,--but pray to God  
You mayn't be left the last of all your friends.

STRANGER.

Well! well! you've one friend more than you're aware of.  
If the Squire's taste don't suit with your's, I warrant  
That's all you'll quarrel with: walk in and taste  
His beer, old friend! and see if your old Lady  
E'er broached a better cask. You did not know me,  
But we're acquainted now. 'Twould not be easy  
To make you like the outside; but within--  
That is not changed my friend! you'll always find  
The same old bounty and old welcome there.



## English Eclogues Ii - The Grandmother's Tale

JANE.

Harry! I'm tired of playing. We'll draw round  
The fire, and Grandmamma perhaps will tell us  
One of her stories.

HARRY.

Aye--dear Grandmamma!  
A pretty story! something dismal now;  
A bloody murder.

JANE.

Or about a ghost.

GRANDMOTHER.

Nay, nay, I should but frighten you. You know  
The other night when I was telling you  
About the light in the church-yard, how you trembled  
Because the screech-owl hooted at the window,  
And would not go to bed.

JANE.

Why Grandmamma  
You said yourself you did not like to hear him.  
Pray now! we wo'nt be frightened.

GRANDMOTHER.

Well, well, children!  
But you've heard all my stories. Let me see,--  
Did I never tell you how the smuggler murdered  
The woman down at Pill?

HARRY.

No--never! never!

GRANDMOTHER.

Not how he cut her head off in the stable?

HARRY.

Oh--now! do tell us that!

GRANDMOTHER.

You must have heard

Your Mother, children! often tell of her.

She used to weed in the garden here, and worm

Your uncle's dogs, and serve the house with coal;

And glad enough she was in winter time

To drive her asses here! it was cold work

To follow the slow beasts thro' sleet and snow,

And here she found a comfortable meal

And a brave fire to thaw her, for poor Moll

Was always welcome.

HARRY.

Oh--'twas blar-eyed Moll

The collier woman,--a great ugly woman,

I've heard of her.

GRANDMOTHER.

Ugly enough poor soul!

At ten yards distance you could hardly tell

If it were man or woman, for her voice

Was rough as our old mastiff's, and she wore

A man's old coat and hat,--and then her face!

There was a merry story told of her,

How when the press-gang came to take her husband

As they were both in bed, she heard them coming,

Drest John up in her night-cap, and herself

Put on his clothes and went before the Captain.

JANE.

And so they prest a woman!



GRANDMOTHER.

'Twas a trick  
She dearly loved to tell, and all the country  
Soon knew the jest, for she was used to travel  
For miles around. All weathers and all hours  
She crossed the hill, as hardy as her beasts,  
Bearing the wind and rain and winter frosts,  
And if she did not reach her home at night  
She laid her down in the stable with her asses  
And slept as sound as they did.

HARRY.

With her asses!

GRANDMOTHER.

Yes, and she loved her beasts. For tho' poor wretch  
She was a terrible reprobate and swore  
Like any trooper, she was always good  
To the dumb creatures, never loaded them  
Beyond their strength, and rather I believe  
Would stint herself than let the poor beasts want,  
Because, she said, they could not ask for food.  
I never saw her stick fall heavier on them  
Than just with its own weight. She little thought  
This tender-heartedness would be her death!  
There was a fellow who had oftentimes,  
As if he took delight in cruelty.  
Ill-used her Asses. He was one who lived  
By smuggling, and, for she had often met him  
Crossing the down at night, she threatened him,  
If he tormented them again, to inform  
Of his unlawful ways. Well--so it was--  
'Twas what they both were born to, he provoked her,  
She laid an information, and one morn  
They found her in the stable, her throat cut  
From ear to ear, 'till the head only hung  
Just by a bit of skin.

JANE.

Oh dear! oh dear!

HARRY.

I hope they hung the man!

GRANDMOTHER.

They took him up;  
There was no proof, no one had seen the deed,  
And he was set at liberty. But God  
Whose eye beholdeth all things, he had seen  
The murder, and the murderer knew that God  
Was witness to his crime. He fled the place,  
But nowhere could he fly the avenging hand  
Of heaven, but nowhere could the murderer rest,  
A guilty conscience haunted him, by day,  
By night, in company, in solitude,  
Restless and wretched, did he bear upon him  
The weight of blood; her cries were in his ears,  
Her stifled groans as when he knelt upon her  
Always he heard; always he saw her stand  
Before his eyes; even in the dead of night  
Distinctly seen as tho' in the broad sun,  
She stood beside the murderer's bed and yawn'd  
Her ghastly wound; till life itself became  
A punishment at last he could not bear,  
And he confess'd it all, and gave himself  
To death, so terrible, he said, it was  
To have a guilty conscience!

HARRY.

Was he hung then?

GRANDMOTHER.

Hung and anatomized. Poor wretched man,  
Your uncles went to see him on his trial,  
He was so pale, so thin, so hollow-eyed,

And such a horror in his meagre face,  
They said he look'd like one who never slept.  
He begg'd the prayers of all who saw his end  
And met his death with fears that well might warn  
From guilt, tho' not without a hope in Christ.

Robert Southey

## English Eclogues Iii - The Funeral

The coffin as I past across the lane  
Came sudden on my view. It was not here,  
A sight of every day, as in the streets  
Of the great city, and we paus'd and ask'd  
Who to the grave was going. It was one,  
A village girl, they told us, who had borne  
An eighteen months strange illness, and had pined  
With such slow wasting that the hour of death  
Came welcome to her. We pursued our way  
To the house of mirth, and with that idle talk  
That passes o'er the mind and is forgot,  
We wore away the time. But it was eve  
When homewardly I went, and in the air  
Was that cool freshness, that discolouring shade  
That makes the eye turn inward. Then I heard  
Over the vale the heavy toll of death  
Sound slow; it made me think upon the dead,  
I questioned more and learnt her sorrowful tale.  
She bore unhusbanded a mother's name,  
And he who should have cherished her, far off  
Sail'd on the seas, self-exil'd from his home,  
For he was poor. Left thus, a wretched one,  
Scorn made a mock of her, and evil tongues  
Were busy with her name. She had one ill  
Heavier, neglect, forgetfulness from him  
Whom she had loved so dearly. Once he wrote,  
But only once that drop of comfort came  
To mingle with her cup of wretchedness;  
And when his parents had some tidings from him,  
There was no mention of poor Hannah there,  
Or 'twas the cold enquiry, bitterer  
Than silence. So she pined and pined away  
And for herself and baby toil'd and toil'd,  
Nor did she, even on her death bed, rest  
From labour, knitting with her outstretch'd arms  
Till she sunk with very weakness. Her old mother  
Omitted no kind office, and she work'd  
Hard, and with hardest working barely earn'd  
Enough to make life struggle and prolong

The pains of grief and sickness. Thus she lay  
On the sick bed of poverty, so worn  
With her long suffering and that painful thought  
That at her heart lay rankling, and so weak,  
That she could make no effort to express  
Affection for her infant; and the child,  
Whose lisping love perhaps had solaced her  
With a strange infantine ingratitude  
Shunn'd her as one indifferent. She was past  
That anguish, for she felt her hour draw on,  
And 'twas her only comfoft now to think  
Upon the grave. 'Poor girl!' her mother said,  
'Thou hast suffered much!' 'aye mother! there is none  
'Can tell what I have suffered!' she replied,  
'But I shall soon be where the weary rest.'  
And she did rest her soon, for it pleased God  
To take her to his mercy.

Robert Southey

## English Eclogues Iv - The Sailor's Mother

WOMAN.

Sir for the love of God some small relief  
To a poor woman!

TRAVELLER.

Whither are you bound?  
'Tis a late hour to travel o'er these downs,  
No house for miles around us, and the way  
Dreary and wild. The evening wind already  
Makes one's teeth chatter, and the very Sun,  
Setting so pale behind those thin white clouds,  
Looks cold. 'Twill be a bitter night!

WOMAN.

Aye Sir  
'Tis cutting keen! I smart at every breath,  
Heaven knows how I shall reach my journey's end,  
For the way is long before me, and my feet,  
God help me! sore with travelling. I would gladly,  
If it pleased God, lie down at once and die.

TRAVELLER.

Nay nay cheer up! a little food and rest  
Will comfort you; and then your journey's end  
Will make amends for all. You shake your head,  
And weep. Is it some evil business then  
That leads you from your home?

WOMAN.

Sir I am going  
To see my son at Plymouth, sadly hurt  
In the late action, and in the hospital  
Dying, I fear me, now.

TRAVELLER.

Perhaps your fears

Make evil worse. Even if a limb be lost

There may be still enough for comfort left

An arm or leg shot off, there's yet the heart

To keep life warm, and he may live to talk

With pleasure of the glorious fight that maim'd him,

Proud of his loss. Old England's gratitude

Makes the maim'd sailor happy.

WOMAN.

'Tis not that--

An arm or leg--I could have borne with that.

'Twas not a ball, it was some cursed thing

That bursts and burns that hurt him. Something Sir

They do not use on board our English ships

It is so wicked!

TRAVELLER.

Rascals! a mean art

Of cruel cowardice, yet all in vain!

WOMAN.

Yes Sir! and they should show no mercy to them

For making use of such unchristian arms.

I had a letter from the hospital,

He got some friend to write it, and he tells me

That my poor boy has lost his precious eyes,

Burnt out. Alas! that I should ever live

To see this wretched day!--they tell me Sir

There is no cure for wounds like his. Indeed

'Tis a hard journey that I go upon

To such a dismal end!

TRAVELLER.

He yet may live.

But if the worst should chance, why you must bear

The will of heaven with patience. Were it not

Some comfort to reflect your son has fallen  
Fighting his country's cause? and for yourself  
You will not in unpitied poverty  
Be left to mourn his loss. Your grateful country  
Amid the triumph of her victory  
Remember those who paid its price of blood,  
And with a noble charity relieves  
The widow and the orphan.

WOMAN.

God reward them!  
God bless them, it will help me in my age  
But Sir! it will not pay me for my child!

TRAVELLER.

Was he your only child?

WOMAN.

My only one,  
The stay and comfort of my widowhood,  
A dear good boy!--when first he went to sea  
I felt what it would come to,--something told me  
I should be childless soon. But tell me Sir  
If it be true that for a hurt like his  
There is no cure? please God to spare his life  
Tho' he be blind, yet I should be so thankful!  
I can remember there was a blind man  
Lived in our village, one from his youth up  
Quite dark, and yet he was a merry man,  
And he had none to tend on him so well  
As I would tend my boy!

TRAVELLER.

Of this be sure  
His hurts are look'd to well, and the best help  
The place affords, as rightly is his due,  
Ever at hand. How happened it he left you?  
Was a seafaring life his early choice?



WOMAN.

No Sir! poor fellow--he was wise enough  
To be content at home, and 'twas a home  
As comfortable Sir I even tho' I say it,  
As any in the country. He was left  
A little boy when his poor father died,  
Just old enough to totter by himself  
And call his mother's name. We two were all,  
And as we were not left quite destitute  
We bore up well. In the summer time I worked  
Sometimes a-field. Then I was famed for knitting,  
And in long winter nights my spinning wheel  
Seldom stood still. We had kind neighbours too  
And never felt distress. So he grew up  
A comely lad and wonderous well disposed;  
I taught him well; there was not in the parish  
A child who said his prayers more regular,  
Or answered readier thro' his catechism.  
If I had foreseen this! but 'tis a blessing  
We do'nt know what we're born to!

TRAVELLER.

But how came it  
He chose to be a Sailor?

WOMAN.

You shall hear Sir;  
As he grew up he used to watch the birds  
In the corn, child's work you know, and easily done.  
'Tis an idle sort of task, so he built up  
A little hut of wicker-work and clay  
Under the hedge, to shelter him in rain.  
And then he took for very idleness  
To making traps to catch the plunderers,  
All sorts of cunning traps that boys can make--  
Propping a stone to fall and shut them in,  
Or crush them with its weight, or else a springe  
Swung on a bough. He made them cleverly--

And I, poor foolish woman! I was pleased  
To see the boy so handy. You may guess  
What followed Sir from this unlucky skill.  
He did what he should not when he was older:  
I warn'd him oft enough; but he was caught  
In wiring hares at last, and had his choice  
The prison or the ship.

TRAVELLER.

The choice at least  
Was kindly left him, and for broken laws  
This was methinks no heavy punishment.

WOMAN.

So I was told Sir. And I tried to think so,  
But 'twas a sad blow to me! I was used  
To sleep at nights soundly and undisturb'd--  
Now if the wind blew rough, it made me start  
And think of my poor boy tossing about  
Upon the roaring seas. And then I seem'd  
To feel that it was hard to take him from me  
For such a little fault. But he was wrong  
Oh very wrong--a murrain on his traps!  
See what they've brought him too!

TRAVELLER.

Well! well! take comfort  
He will be taken care of if he lives;  
And should you lose your child, this is a country  
Where the brave sailor never leaves a parent  
To weep for him in want.

WOMAN.

Sir I shall want  
No succour long. In the common course of years  
I soon must be at rest, and 'tis a comfort  
When grief is hard upon me to reflect  
It only leads me to that rest the sooner.

Robert Southey

# English Eclogues V - The Witch

NATHANIEL.

Father! here father! I have found a horse-shoe!  
Faith it was just in time, for t'other night  
I laid two straws across at Margery's door,  
And afterwards I fear'd that she might do me  
A mischief for't. There was the Miller's boy  
Who set his dog at that black cat of hers,  
I met him upon crutches, and he told me  
'Twas all her evil eye.

FATHER.

'Tis rare good luck;  
I would have gladly given a crown for one  
If t'would have done as well. But where did'st find it?

NATHANIEL.

Down on the Common; I was going a-field  
And neighbour Saunders pass'd me on his mare;  
He had hardly said 'good day,' before I saw  
The shoe drop off; 'twas just upon my tongue  
To call him back,--it makes no difference, does it.  
Because I know whose 'twas?

FATHER.

Why no, it can't.  
The shoe's the same you know, and you 'did find' it.

NATHANIEL.

That mare of his has got a plaguey road  
To travel, father, and if he should lame her,  
For she is but tender-footed,--

FATHER.

Aye, indeed--

I should not like to see her limping back  
Poor beast! but charity begins at home,  
And Nat, there's our own horse in such a way  
This morning!

NATHANIEL.

Why he ha'nt been rid again!  
Last night I hung a pebble by the manger  
With a hole thro', and every body says  
That 'tis a special charm against the hags.

FATHER.

It could not be a proper natural hole then,  
Or 'twas not a right pebble,--for I found him  
Smoking with sweat, quaking in every limb,  
And panting so! God knows where he had been  
When we were all asleep, thro' bush and brake  
Up-hill and down-hill all alike, full stretch  
At such a deadly rate!--

NATHANIEL.

By land and water,  
Over the sea perhaps!--I have heard tell  
That 'tis some thousand miles, almost at the end  
Of the world, where witches go to meet the Devil.  
They used to ride on broomsticks, and to smear  
Some ointment over them and then away  
Out of the window! but 'tis worse than all  
To worry the poor beasts so. Shame upon it  
That in a Christian country they should let  
Such creatures live!

FATHER.

And when there's such plain proof!  
I did but threaten her because she robb'd  
Our hedge, and the next night there came a wind  
That made me shake to hear it in my bed!  
How came it that that storm unroofed my barn,

And only mine in the parish? look at her  
And that's enough; she has it in her face--  
A pair of large dead eyes, rank in her head,  
Just like a corpse, and purs'd with wrinkles round,  
A nose and chin that scarce leave room between  
For her lean fingers to squeeze in the snuff,  
And when she speaks! I'd sooner hear a raven  
Croak at my door! she sits there, nose and knees  
Smoak-dried and shrivell'd over a starved fire,  
With that black cat beside her, whose great eyes  
Shine like old Beelzebub's, and to be sure  
It must be one of his imps!--aye, nail it hard.

NATHANIEL.

I wish old Margery heard the hammer go!  
She'd curse the music.

FATHER.

Here's the Curate coming,  
He ought to rid the parish of such vermin;  
In the old times they used to hunt them out  
And hang them without mercy, but Lord bless us!  
The world is grown so wicked!

CURATE.

Good day Farmer!  
Nathaniel what art nailing to the threshold?

NATHANIEL.

A horse-shoe Sir, 'tis good to keep off witchcraft,  
And we're afraid of Margery.

CURATE.

Poor old woman!  
What can you fear from her?

FATHER.

What can we fear?

Who lamed the Miller's boy? who rais'd the wind  
That blew my old barn's roof down? who d'ye think  
Rides my poor horse a'nights? who mocks the hounds?  
But let me catch her at that trick again,  
And I've a silver bullet ready for her,  
One that shall lame her, double how she will.

NATHANIEL.

What makes her sit there moping by herself,  
With no soul near her but that great black cat?  
And do but look at her!

CURATE.

Poor wretch! half blind  
And crooked with her years, without a child  
Or friend in her old age, 'tis hard indeed  
To have her very miseries made her crimes!  
I met her but last week in that hard frost  
That made my young limbs ache, and when I ask'd  
What brought her out in the snow, the poor old woman  
Told me that she was forced to crawl abroad  
And pick the hedges, just to keep herself  
From perishing with cold, because no neighbour  
Had pity on her age; and then she cried,  
And said the children pelted her with snow-balls,  
And wish'd that she were dead.

FATHER.

I wish she was!  
She has plagued the parish long enough!

CURATE.

Shame farmer!  
Is that the charity your bible teaches?

FATHER.

My bible does not teach me to love witches.  
I know what's charity; who pays his tithes  
And poor-rates readier?

CURATE.

Who can better do it?  
You've been a prudent and industrious man,  
And God has blest your labour.

FATHER.

Why, thank God Sir,  
I've had no reason to complain of fortune.

CURATE.

Complain! why you are wealthy. All the parish  
Look up to you.

FATHER.

Perhaps Sir, I could tell  
Guinea for guinea with the warmest of them.

CURATE.

You can afford a little to the poor,  
And then what's better still, you have the heart  
To give from your abundance.

FATHER.

God forbid  
I should want charity!

CURATE.

Oh! 'tis a comfort  
To think at last of riches well employ'd!  
I have been by a death-bed, and know the worth



Of a good deed at that most awful hour  
When riches profit not.  
Farmer, I'm going  
To visit Margery. She is sick I hear--  
Old, poor, and sick! a miserable lot,  
And death will be a blessing. You might send her  
Some little matter, something comfortable,  
That she may go down easier to the grave  
And bless you when she dies.

FATHER.

What! is she going!  
Well God forgive her then! if she has dealt  
In the black art. I'll tell my dame of it,  
And she shall send her something.

CURATE.

So I'll say;  
And take my thanks for her's. ['goes']

FATHER.

That's a good man  
That Curate, Nat, of ours, to go and visit  
The poor in sickness; but he don't believe  
In witchcraft, and that is not like a christian.

NATHANIEL.

And so old Margery's dying!

FATHER.

But you know  
She may recover; so drive t'other nail in!

Robert Southey

## English Eclogues Vi - The Ruined Cottage

Aye Charles! I knew that this would fix thine eye,  
This woodbine wreathing round the broken porch,  
Its leaves just withering, yet one autumn flower  
Still fresh and fragrant; and yon holly-hock  
That thro' the creeping weeds and nettles tall  
Peers taller, and uplifts its column'd stem  
Bright with the broad rose-blossoms. I have seen  
Many a fallen convent reverend in decay,  
And many a time have trod the castle courts  
And grass-green halls, yet never did they strike  
Home to the heart such melancholy thoughts  
As this poor cottage. Look, its little hatch  
Fleeced with that grey and wintry moss; the roof  
Part mouldered in, the rest o'ergrown with weeds,  
House-leek and long thin grass and greener moss;  
So Nature wars with all the works of man.  
And, like himself, reduces back to earth  
His perishable piles.  
I led thee here  
Charles, not without design; for this hath been  
My favourite walk even since I was a boy;  
And I remember Charles, this ruin here,  
The neatest comfortable dwelling place!  
That when I read in those dear books that first  
Woke in my heart the love of poesy,  
How with the villagers Erminia dwelt,  
And Calidore for a fair shepherdess  
Forgot his quest to learn the shepherd's lore;  
My fancy drew from, this the little hut  
Where that poor princess wept her hopeless love,  
Or where the gentle Calidore at eve  
Led Pastorella home. There was not then  
A weed where all these nettles overtop  
The garden wall; but sweet-briar, scenting sweet  
The morning air, rosemary and marjoram,  
All wholesome herbs; and then, that woodbine wreath'd  
So lavishly around the pillared porch  
Its fragrant flowers, that when I past this way,  
After a truant absence hastening home,

I could not chuse but pass with slacken'd speed  
By that delightful fragrance. Sadly changed  
Is this poor cottage! and its dwellers, Charles!--  
Theirs is a simple melancholy tale,  
There's scarce a village but can fellow it,  
And yet methinks it will not weary thee,  
And should not be untold.

A widow woman

Dwelt with her daughter here; just above want,  
She lived on some small pittance that sufficed,  
In better times, the needful calls of life,  
Not without comfort. I remember her  
Sitting at evening in that open door way  
And spinning in the sun; methinks I see her  
Raising her eyes and dark-rimm'd spectacles  
To see the passer by, yet ceasing not  
To twirl her lengthening thread. Or in the garden  
On some dry summer evening, walking round  
To view her flowers, and pointing, as she lean'd  
Upon the ivory handle of her stick,  
To some carnation whose o'erheavy head  
Needed support, while with the watering-pot  
Joanna followed, and refresh'd and trimm'd  
The drooping plant; Joanna, her dear child,  
As lovely and as happy then as youth  
And innocence could make her.

Charles! it seems

As tho' I were a boy again, and all  
The mediate years with their vicissitudes  
A half-forgotten dream. I see the Maid  
So comely in her Sunday dress! her hair,  
Her bright brown hair, wreath'd in contracting curls,  
And then her cheek! it was a red and white  
That made the delicate hues of art look loathsome,  
The countrymen who on their way to church  
Were leaning o'er the bridge, loitering to hear  
The bell's last summons, and in idleness  
Watching the stream below, would all look up  
When she pass'd by. And her old Mother, Charles!  
When I have beard some erring infidel  
Speak of our faith as of a gloomy creed,  
Inspiring fear and boding wretchedness.

Her figure has recurr'd; for she did love  
The sabbath-day, and many a time has cross'd  
These fields in rain and thro' the winter snows.  
When I, a graceless boy, wishing myself  
By the fire-side, have wondered why 'she' came  
Who might have sate at home.

One only care  
Hung on her aged spirit. For herself,  
Her path was plain before her, and the close  
Of her long journey near. But then her child  
Soon to be left alone in this bad world,--  
That was a thought that many a winter night  
Had kept her sleepless: and when prudent love  
In something better than a servant's slate  
Had placed her well at last, it was a pang  
Like parting life to part with her dear girl.

One summer, Charles, when at the holydays  
Return'd from school, I visited again  
My old accustomed walks, and found in them.  
A joy almost like meeting an old friend,  
I saw the cottage empty, and the weeds  
Already crowding the neglected flowers.  
Joanna by a villain's wiles seduced  
Had played the wanton, and that blow had reach'd  
Her mother's heart. She did not suffer long,  
Her age was feeble, and the heavy blow  
Brought her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

I pass this ruin'd dwelling oftentimes  
And think of other days. It wakes in me  
A transient sadness, but the feelings Charles  
That ever with these recollections rise,  
I trust in God they will not pass away.

Robert Southey

# Go, Valentine

Go, Valentine, and tell that lovely maid  
Whom fancy still will portray to my sight,  
How here I linger in this sullen shade,  
This dreary gloom of dull monastic night;  
Say, that every joy of life remote  
At evening's closing hour I quit the throng,  
Listening in solitude the ring-dome's note,  
Who pours like me her solitary song;  
Say, that of her absence calls the sorrowing sigh;  
Say, that of all her charms I love to speak,  
In fancy feel the magic of her eye,  
In fancy view the smile illumine her cheek,  
Court the lone hour when silence stills the grove,  
And heave the sigh of memory and of love.

Robert Southey

# God's Judgment On A Wicked Bishop

The summer and autumn had been so wet,  
That in winter the corn was growing yet,  
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around  
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor  
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,  
For he had a plentiful last-year's store,  
And all the neighbourhood could tell  
His granaries were furnish'd well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day  
To quiet the poor without delay;  
He bade them to his great Barn repair,  
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,  
The poor folk flock'd from far and near;  
The great barn was full as it could hold  
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,  
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;  
And while for mercy on Christ they call,  
He set fire to the Barn and burnt them all.

"I'faith 'tis an excellent bonfire!" quoth he,  
"And the country is greatly obliged to me,  
For ridding it in these times forlorn  
Of Rats that only consume the corn."

So then to his palace returned he,  
And he sat down to supper merrily,  
And he slept that night like an innocent man;  
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning as he enter'd the hall  
Where his picture hung against the wall,  
A sweat like death all over him came,

For the Rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he look'd there came a man from his farm--  
He had a countenance white with alarm;  
"My Lord, I open'd your granaries this morn,  
And the Rats had eaten all your corn."

Another came running presently,  
And he was pale as pale could be,  
"Fly! my Lord Bishop, fly," quoth he,  
"Ten thousand Rats are coming this way,...  
The Lord forgive you for yesterday!"

"I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he,  
"'Tis the safest place in Germany;  
The walls are high and the shores are steep,  
And the stream is strong and the water deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hasten'd away,  
And he crost the Rhine without delay,  
And reach'd his tower, and barr'd with care  
All the windows, doors, and loop-holes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes;...  
But soon a scream made him arise,  
He started and saw two eyes of flame  
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

He listen'd and look'd;... it was only the Cat;  
And the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,  
For she sat screaming, mad with fear  
At the Army of Rats that were drawing near.

For they have swum over the river so deep,  
And they have climb'd the shores so steep,  
And up the Tower their way is bent,  
To do the work for which they were sent.

They are not to be told by the dozen or score,  
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more,  
Such numbers had never been heard of before,  
Such a judgment had never been witness'd of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,  
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,  
As louder and louder drawing near  
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

And in at the windows and in at the door,  
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,  
And down from the ceiling and up through the floor,  
From the right and the left, from behind and before,  
From within and without, from above and below,  
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,  
And now they pick the Bishop's bones:  
They gnaw'd the flesh from every limb,  
For they were sent to do judgment on him!

Robert Southey



# Henry The Hermit

It was a little island where he dwelt,  
Or rather a lone rock, barren and bleak,  
Short scanty herbage spotting with dark spots  
Its gray stone surface. Never mariner  
Approach'd that rude and uninviting coast,  
Nor ever fisherman his lonely bark  
Anchored beside its shore. It was a place  
Befitting well a rigid anchoret,  
Dead to the hopes, and vanities, and joys  
And purposes of life; and he had dwelt  
Many long years upon that lonely isle,  
For in ripe manhood he abandoned arms,  
Honours and friends and country and the world,  
And had grown old in solitude. That isle  
Some solitary man in other times  
Had made his dwelling-place; and Henry found  
The little chapel that his toil had built  
Now by the storms unroofed, his bed of leaves  
Wind-scattered, and his grave o'ergrown with grass,  
And thistles, whose white seeds winged in vain  
Withered on rocks, or in the waves were lost.  
So he repaired the chapel's ruined roof,  
Clear'd the grey lichens from the altar-stone,  
And underneath a rock that shelter'd him  
From the sea blasts, he built his hermitage.

The peasants from the shore would bring him food  
And beg his prayers; but human converse else  
He knew not in that utter solitude,  
Nor ever visited the haunts of men  
Save when some sinful wretch on a sick bed  
Implored his blessing and his aid in death.  
That summons he delayed not to obey,  
Tho' the night tempest or autumnal wind.  
Maddened the waves, and tho' the mariner,  
Albeit relying on his saintly load,  
Grew pale to see the peril. So he lived  
A most austere and self-denying man,  
Till abstinence, and age, and watchfulness

Exhausted him, and it was pain at last  
To rise at midnight from his bed of leaves  
And bend his knees in prayer. Yet not the less  
Tho' with reluctance of infirmity,  
He rose at midnight from his bed of leaves  
And bent his knees in prayer; but with more zeal  
More self-condemning fervour rais'd his voice  
For pardon for that sin, 'till that the sin  
Repented was a joy like a good deed.

One night upon the shore his chapel bell  
Was heard; the air was calm, and its far sounds  
Over the water came distinct and loud.  
Alarmed at that unusual hour to hear  
Its toll irregular, a monk arose.  
The boatmen bore him willingly across  
For well the hermit Henry was beloved.  
He hastened to the chapel, on a stone  
Henry was sitting there, cold, stiff and dead,  
The bell-rope in his hand, and at his feet  
The lamp that stream'd a long unsteady light

Robert Southey

# High In The Air Exposed

High in the air exposed the slave is hung,  
To all the birds of heaven, their living food!  
He groans not, though awaked by that fierce sun  
New torturers live to drink their parent blood;  
He groans not, though the gorging vulture tear  
The quivering fiber. Hither look, O ye  
Who tore this man from peace and liberty!  
Look hither, ye who weigh with politic care  
The gain against the guilt! Beyond the grave  
There is another world: bear ye in mind,  
Ere your decree proclaims to all mankind  
The gain is worth the guilt, that there the Slave,  
Before the Eternal, "thunder-tongued shall plead  
Against the deep damnation of your deed.

Robert Southey

## His Books

MY days among the Dead are past;  
    Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
    The mighty minds of old:  
My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal  
    And seek relief in woe;  
And while I understand and feel  
    How much to them I owe,  
My cheeks have often been bedew'd  
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them  
    I live in long-past years,  
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
    Partake their hopes and fears;  
And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon  
    My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
    Through all Futurity;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.

Robert Southey

# Hold Your Mad Hands

Hold your mad hands! for ever on your plain  
Must the gorged vulture clog his beak with blood?  
For ever must your Niger's tainted flood,  
Roll to the ravenous shark his banquet slain?  
Hold your mad hands! and learn at length to know,  
And turn your vengeance on the common foe,  
Yon treacherous vessel and her godless crew!  
Let never traders with false pretext fair  
Set on your shores again their wicked feet:  
With interdict and indignation meet  
Repel them, and with fire and sword pursue!  
Avarice, the white cadaverous fiend, is there,  
Who spreads his toils accursed wide and far,  
And for his purveyor calls the demon War.

Robert Southey

# Hymn To The Penates

Yet one Song more! one high and solemn strain  
Ere PAEAN! on thy temple's ruined wall  
I hang the silent harp: there may its strings,  
When the rude tempest shakes the aged pile,  
Make melancholy music. One Song more!  
PENATES! hear me! for to you I hymn  
The votive lay. Whether, as sages deem,  
Ye dwell in the inmost Heaven, the COUNSELLORS  
Of JOVE; or if, SUPREME OF DEITIES,  
All things are yours, and in your holy train  
JOVE proudly ranks, and JUNO, white arm'd Queen.

And wisest of Immortals, awful Maid  
ATHENIAN PALLAS. Venerable Powers!  
Hearken your hymn of praise! tho' from your rites  
Estranged, and exiled from your altars long,  
I have not ceased to love you, HOUSEHOLD GODS!  
In many a long and melancholy hour  
Of solitude and sorrow, has my heart  
With earnest longings prayed to rest at length  
Beside your hallowed hearth--for PEACE is there!

Yes I have loved you long. I call on you  
Yourselves to witness with what holy joy,  
Shunning the polished mob of human kind,  
I have retired to watch your lonely fires  
And commune with myself. Delightful hours  
That gave mysterious pleasure, made me know  
All the recesses of my wayward heart,  
Taught me to cherish with devoutest care  
Its strange unworldly feelings, taught me too  
The best of lessons--to respect myself!

Nor have I ever ceas'd to reverence you  
DOMESTIC DEITIES! from the first dawn  
Of reason, thro' the adventurous paths of youth  
Even to this better day, when on mine ear  
The uproar of contending nations sounds,  
But like the passing wind--and wakes no pulse

To tumult. When a child--(for still I love  
To dwell with fondness on my childish years,  
Even as that Persian favorite would retire  
From the court's dangerous pageantry and pomp,  
To gaze upon his shepherd garb, and weep,  
Rememb'ring humble happiness.) When first  
A little one, I left my father's home,  
I can remember the first grief I felt,  
And the first painful smile that cloathed my front  
With feelings not its own: sadly at night  
I sat me down beside a stranger's hearth;  
And when the lingering hour of rest was come,  
First wet with tears my pillow. As I grew  
In years and knowledge, and the course of Time  
Developed the young feelings of my heart,  
When most I loved in solitude to rove  
Amid the woodland gloom; or where the rocks  
Darken'd old Avon's stream, in the ivied cave  
Recluse to sit and brood the future song,  
Yet not the less, PENATES, loved I then  
Your altars, not the less at evening hour  
Delighted by the well-trimm'd fire to sit,  
Absorbed in many a dear deceitful dream  
Of visionary joys: deceitful dreams--  
Not wholly vain--for painting purest joys,  
They form'd to Fancy's mould her votary's heart.

By Cherwell's sedgey side, and in the meads  
Where Isis in her calm clear stream reflects  
The willow's bending boughs, at earliest dawn  
In the noon-tide hour, and when the night-mists rose,  
I have remembered you: and when the noise  
Of loud intemperance on my lonely ear  
Burst with loud tumult, as recluse I sat,  
Pondering on loftiest themes of man redeemed  
From servitude, and vice, and wretchedness,  
I blest you, HOUSEHOLD GODS! because I loved  
Your peaceful altars and serener rites.  
Nor did I cease to reverence you, when driven  
Amid the jarring crowd, an unfit man  
To mingle with the world; still, still my heart  
Sighed for your sanctuary, and inly pined;

And loathing human converse, I have strayed  
Where o'er the sea-beach chilly howl'd the blast,  
And gaz'd upon the world of waves, and wished  
That I were far beyond the Atlantic deep,  
In woodland haunts--a sojourner with PEACE.

Not idly fabled they the Bards inspired,  
Who peopled Earth with Deities. They trod  
The wood with reverence where the DRYADS dwelt;  
At day's dim dawn or evening's misty hour  
They saw the OREADS on their mountain haunts.  
And felt their holy influence, nor impure  
Of thought--or ever with polluted hands  
Touched they without a prayer the NAIAD'S spring;  
Yet was their influence transient; such brief awe  
Inspiring as the thunder's long loud peal  
Strikes to the feeble spirit. HOUSEHOLD GODS,  
Not such your empire! in your votaries' breasts  
No momentary impulse ye awake--  
Nor fleeting like their local energies,  
The deep devotion that your fanes impart.  
O ye whom YOUTH has wilder'd on your way,  
Or VICE with fair-mask'd foulness, or the lure  
Of FAME that calls ye to her crowded paths  
With FOLLY's rattle, to your HOUSEHOLD GODS  
Return! for not in VICE's gay abodes,  
Not in the unquiet unsafe halls of FAME  
Does HAPPINESS abide! O ye who weep  
Much for the many miseries of Mankind,  
More for their vices, ye whose honest eyes  
Frown on OPPRESSION,--ye whose honest hearts  
Beat high when FREEDOM sounds her dread tocsin;--  
O ye who quit the path of peaceful life  
Crusading for mankind--a spaniel race  
That lick the hand that beats them, or tear all  
Alike in frenzy--to your HOUSEHOLD GODS  
Return, for by their altars VIRTUE dwells  
And HAPPINESS with her; for by their fires  
TRANQUILLITY in no unsocial mood  
Sits silent, listening to the pattering shower;  
For, so SUSPICION sleep not at the gate  
Of WISDOM,--FALSEHOOD shall not enter there.



As on the height of some huge eminence,  
Reach'd with long labour, the way-faring man  
Pauses awhile, and gazing o'er the plain  
With many a sore step travelled, turns him then  
Serious to contemplate the onward road,  
And calls to mind the comforts of his home,  
And sighs that he has left them, and resolves  
To stray no more: I on my way of life  
Muse thus PENATES, and with firmest faith  
Devote myself to you. I will not quit  
To mingle with the mob your calm abodes,  
Where, by the evening hearth CONTENTMENT sits  
And hears the cricket chirp; where LOVE delights  
To dwell, and on your altars lays his torch  
That burns with no extinguishable flame.

Hear me ye POWERS benignant! there is one  
Must be mine inmate--for I may not chuse  
But love him. He is one whom many wrongs  
Have sicken'd of the world. There was a time  
When he would weep to hear of wickedness  
And wonder at the tale; when for the opprest  
He felt a brother's pity, to the oppressor  
A good man's honest anger. His quick eye  
Betray'd each rising feeling, every thought  
Leapt to his tongue. When first among mankind  
He mingled, by himself he judged of them,  
And loved and trusted them, to Wisdom deaf,  
And took them to his bosom. FALSEHOOD met  
Her unsuspecting victim, fair of front,  
And lovely as Apega's sculptured form,  
Like that false image caught his warm embrace  
And gored his open breast. The reptile race  
Clung round his bosom, and with viper folds  
Encircling, stung the fool who fostered them.  
His mother was SIMPLICITY, his sire  
BENEVOLENCE; in earlier days he bore  
His father's name; the world who injured him  
Call him MISANTHROPY. I may not chuse  
But love him, HOUSEHOLD GODS! for we were nurst  
In the same school.

PENATES! some there are  
Who say, that not in the inmost heaven ye dwell,  
Gazing with eye remote on all the ways  
Of man, his GUARDIAN GODS; wiselier they deem  
A dearer interest to the human race  
Links you, yourselves the SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.  
No mortal eye may pierce the invisible world,  
No light of human reason penetrate  
That depth where Truth lies hid. Yet to this faith  
My heart with instant sympathy assents;  
And I would judge all systems and all faiths  
By that best touchstone, from whose test DECEIT  
Shrinks like the Arch-Fiend at Ithuriel's spear,  
And SOPHISTRY'S gay glittering bubble bursts,  
As at the spousals of the Nereid's son,  
When that false Florimel, by her prototype  
Display'd in rivalry, with all her charms  
Dissolved away.

Nor can the halls of Heaven  
Give to the human soul such kindred joy,  
As hovering o'er its earthly haunts it feels,  
When with the breeze it wantons round the brow  
Of one beloved on earth; or when at night  
In dreams it comes, and brings with it the DAYS  
And JOYS that are no more, Or when, perchance  
With power permitted to alleviate ill  
And fit the sufferer for the coming woe,  
Some strange presage the SPIRIT breathes, and fills  
The breast with ominous fear, and disciplines  
For sorrow, pours into the afflicted heart  
The balm of resignation, and inspires  
With heavenly hope. Even as a Child delights  
To visit day by day the favorite plant  
His hand has sown, to mark its gradual growth,  
And watch all anxious for the promised flower;  
Thus to the blessed spirit, in innocence  
And pure affections like a little child,  
Sweet will it be to hover o'er the friends  
Beloved; then sweetest if, as Duty prompts,  
With earthly care we in their breasts have sown

The seeds of Truth and Virtue, holy flowers  
Whose odour reacheth Heaven.

When my sick Heart,  
(Sick with hope long delayed, than, which no care  
Presses the crush'd heart heavier from itself  
Seeks the best comfort, often have I deemed  
That thou didst witness every inmost thought  
SEWARD! my dear dead friend! for not in vain,  
Oh early summon'd in thy heavenly course!  
Was thy brief sojourn here: me didst thou leave  
With strengthen'd step to follow the right path  
Till we shall meet again. Meantime I soothe  
The deep regret of Nature, with belief,  
My EDMUND! that thine eye's celestial ken  
Pervades me now, marking no mean joy  
The movements of the heart that loved thee well!

Such feelings Nature prompts, and hence your rites  
DOMESTIC GODS! arose. When for his son  
With ceaseless grief Syrophanes bewail'd,  
Mourning his age left childless, and his wealth  
Heapt for an alien, he with fixed eye  
Still on the imaged marble of the dead  
Dwelt, pampering sorrow. Thither from his wrath  
A safe asylum, fled the offending slave,  
And garlanded the statue and implored  
His young lost Lord to save: Remembrance then  
Softened the father, and he loved to see  
The votive wreath renewed, and the rich smoke  
Curl from the costly censer slow and sweet.  
From Egypt soon the sorrow-soothing rites  
Divulging spread; before your idol forms  
By every hearth the blinded Pagan knelt,  
Pouring his prayers to these, and offering there  
Vain sacrifice or impious, and sometimes  
With human blood your sanctuary defil'd:  
Till the first BRUTUS, tyrant-conquering chief,  
Arose; he first the impious rites put down,  
He fitliest, who for FREEDOM lived and died,  
The friend of humankind. Then did your feasts  
Frequent recur and blameless; and when came

The solemn festival, whose happiest rites  
Emblem'd EQUALITY, the holiest truth!  
Crown'd with gay garlands were your statues seen,  
To you the fragrant censer smok'd, to you  
The rich libation flow'd: vain sacrifice!  
For nor the poppy wreath nor fruits nor wine.  
Ye ask, PENATES! nor the altar cleans'd  
With many a mystic form; ye ask the heart  
Made pure, and by domestic Peace and Love  
Hallowed to you.

Hearken your hymn of praise,  
PENATES! to your shrines I come for rest,  
There only to be found. Often at eve,  
Amid my wanderings I have seen far off  
The lonely light that spake of comfort there,  
It told my heart of many a joy of home,  
And my poor heart was sad. When I have gazed  
From some high eminence on goodly vales  
And cots and villages embower'd below,  
The thought would rise that all to me was strange  
Amid the scene so fair, nor one small spot  
Where my tir'd mind might rest and call it home,  
There is a magic in that little word;  
It is a mystic circle that surrounds  
Comforts and Virtues never known beyond  
The hallowed limit. Often has my heart  
Ached for that quiet haven; haven'd now,  
I think of those in this world's wilderness  
Who wander on and find no home of rest  
Till to the grave they go! them POVERTY  
Hollow-eyed fiend, the child of WEALTH and POWER,  
Bad offspring of worse parents, aye afflicts,  
Cankering with her foul mildews the chill'd heart--  
Them WANT with scorpion scourge drives to the den  
Of GUILT--them SLAUGHTER with the price of death  
Buys for her raven brood. Oh not on them  
GOD OF ETERNAL JUSTICE! not on them  
Let fall thy thunder!

HOUSEHOLD DEITIES!

Then only shall be Happiness on earth

When Man shall feel your sacred power, and love  
Your tranquil joys; then shall the city stand  
A huge void sepulchre, and rising fair  
Amid the ruins of the palace pile  
The Olive grow, there shall the TREE OF PEACE  
Strike its roots deep and flourish. This the state  
Shall bless the race redeemed of Man, when WEALTH  
And POWER and all their hideous progeny  
Shall sink annihilate, and all mankind  
Live in the equal brotherhood of LOVE.  
Heart-calming hope and sure! for hitherward  
Tend all the tumults of the troubled world,  
Its woes, its wisdom, and its wickedness  
Alike: so he hath will'd whose will is just.

Meantime, all hoping and expecting all  
In patient faith, to you, DOMESTIC GODS!  
I come, studious of other lore than song,  
Of my past years the solace and support:  
Yet shall my Heart remember the past years  
With honest pride, trusting that not in vain  
Lives the pure song of LIBERTY and TRUTH.

Robert Southey

# Inchcape Rock

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,  
The Ship was still as she could be;  
Her sails from heaven received no motion,  
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock,  
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock;  
So little they rose, so little they fell,  
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok  
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;  
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,  
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,  
The Mariners heard the warning Bell;  
And then they knew the perilous Rock,  
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok

The Sun in the heaven was shining gay,  
All things were joyful on that day;  
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,  
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcpe Bell was seen  
A darker speck on the ocean green;  
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,  
And fix'd his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,  
It made him whistle, it made him sing;  
His heart was mirthful to excess,  
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape Float;  
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,  
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,  
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,  
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;  
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,  
And he cut the bell from the Inchcape Float.

Down sank the Bell with a gurgling sound,  
The bubbles rose and burst around;  
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock,  
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away,  
He scour'd the seas for many a day;  
And now grown rich with plunder'd store,  
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky,  
They cannot see the sun on high;  
The wind hath blown a gale all day,  
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,  
So dark it is they see no land.  
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,  
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?  
For methinks we should be near the shore."  
"Now, where we are I cannot tell,  
But I wish we could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound, the swell is strong,  
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along;  
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,  
"Oh Christ! It is the Inchcape Rock!"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair,  
He curst himself in his despair;  
The waves rush in on every side,  
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even is his dying fear,

One dreadful sound could the Rover hear;  
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,  
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

Robert Southey



## Inscription 01 - For A Tablet At Godstow Nunnery

Here Stranger rest thee! from the neighbouring towers  
Of Oxford, haply thou hast forced thy bark  
Up this strong stream, whose broken waters here  
Send pleasant murmurs to the listening sense:  
Rest thee beneath this hazel; its green boughs  
Afford a grateful shade, and to the eye  
Fair is its fruit: Stranger! the seemly fruit  
Is worthless, all is hollowness within,  
For on the grave of ROSAMUND it grows!  
Young lovely and beloved she fell seduced,  
And here retir'd to wear her wretched age  
In earnest prayer and bitter penitence,  
Despis'd and self-despising: think of her  
Young Man! and learn to reverence Womankind!

Robert Southey

## Inscription 02 - For A Column At Newbury

Art thou a Patriot Traveller? on this field  
Did FALKLAND fall the blameless and the brave  
Beneath a Tyrant's banners: dost thou boast  
Of loyal ardor? HAMB DEN perish'd here,  
The rebel HAMB DEN, at whose glorious name  
The heart of every honest Englishman  
Beats high with conscious pride. Both uncorrupt,  
Friends to their common country both, they fought,  
They died in adverse armies. Traveller!  
If with thy neighbour thou should'st not accord,  
In charity remember these good men,  
And quell each angry and injurious thought.

Robert Southey

## Inscription 03 - For A Cavern That Overlooks The River Avon

Enter this cavern Stranger! the ascent  
Is long and steep and toilsome; here awhile  
Thou mayest repose thee, from the noontide heat  
O'er-canopied by this arch'd rock that strikes  
A grateful coolness: clasping its rough arms  
Round the rude portal, the old ivy hangs  
Its dark green branches down, and the wild Bees,  
O'er its grey blossoms murmuring ceaseless, make  
Most pleasant melody. No common spot  
Receives thee, for the Power who prompts the song,  
Loves this secluded haunt. The tide below  
Scarce sends the sound of waters to thine ear;  
And this high-hanging forest to the wind  
Varies its many hues. Gaze Stranger here!  
And let thy soften'd heart intensely feel  
How good, how lovely, Nature! When from hence  
Departing to the City's crowded streets,  
Thy sickening eye at every step revolts  
From scenes of vice and wretchedness; reflect  
That Man creates the evil he endures.

Robert Southey

## Inscription 04 - For The Apartment In Chepstow-Castle

For thirty years secluded from mankind,  
Here Marten linger'd. Often have these walls  
Echoed his footsteps, as with even tread  
He paced around his prison: not to him  
Did Nature's fair varieties exist;  
He never saw the Sun's delightful beams,  
Save when thro' yon high bars it pour'd a sad  
And broken splendor. Dost thou ask his crime?  
He had rebell'd against the King, and sat  
In judgment on him; for his ardent mind  
Shaped goodliest plans of happiness on earth,  
And peace and liberty. Wild dreams! But such  
As PLATO lov'd; such as with holy zeal  
Our MILTON worshipp'd. Blessed hopes! awhile  
From man withheld, even to the latter days,  
When CHRIST shall come and all things be fulfill'd.

Robert Southey

## Inscription 05 - For A Monument At Silbury-Hill

This mound in some remote and dateless day  
Rear'd o'er a Chieftain of the Age of Hills,  
May here detain thee Traveller! from thy road  
Not idly lingering. In his narrow house  
Some Warrior sleeps below: his gallant deeds  
Haply at many a solemn festival  
The Bard has harp'd, but perish'd is the song  
Of praise, as o'er these bleak and barren downs  
The wind that passes and is heard no more.  
Go Traveller on thy way, and contemplate  
Glory's brief pageant, and remember then  
That one good deed was never wrought in vain.

Robert Southey

## Inscription 06 - For A Monument In The New Forest

This is the place where William's kingly power  
Did from their poor and peaceful homes expel,  
Unfriended, desolate, and shelterless,  
The habitants of all the fertile track  
Far as these wilds extend. He levell'd down  
Their little cottages, he bade their fields  
Lie barren, so that o'er the forest waste  
He might most royally pursue his sports!  
If that thine heart be human, Passenger!  
Sure it will swell within thee, and thy lips  
Will mutter curses on him. Think thou then  
What cities flame, what hosts unsepulchred  
Pollute the passing wind, when raging Power  
Drives on his blood-hounds to the chase of Man;  
And as thy thoughts anticipate that day  
When God shall judge aright, in charity  
Pray for the wicked rulers of mankind.

Robert Southey

## Inscription 07 - For A Tablet On The Banks Of A Stream

Stranger! awhile upon this mossy bank  
Recline thee. If the Sun rides high, the breeze,  
That loves to ripple o'er the rivulet,  
Will play around thy brow, and the cool sound  
Of running waters soothe thee. Mark how clear  
It sparkles o'er the shallows, and behold  
Where o'er its surface wheels with restless speed  
Yon glossy insect, on the sand below  
How the swift shadow flies. The stream is pure  
In solitude, and many a healthful herb  
Bends o'er its course and drinks the vital wave:  
But passing on amid the haunts of man,  
It finds pollution there, and rolls from thence  
A tainted tide. Seek'st thou for HAPPINESS?  
Go Stranger, sojourn in the woodland cot  
Of INNOCENCE, and thou shalt find her there.

Robert Southey

## Inscription 08 - For The Cenotaph At Ermenonville

STRANGER! the MAN OF NATURE lies not here:  
Enshrin'd far distant by his rival's side  
His relics rest, there by the giddy throng  
With blind idolatry alike revered!  
Wiselier directed have thy pilgrim feet  
Explor'd the scenes of Ermenonville. ROUSSEAU  
Loved these calm haunts of Solitude and Peace;  
Here he has heard the murmurs of the stream,  
And the soft rustling of the poplar grove,  
When o'er their bending boughs the passing wind  
Swept a grey shade. Here if thy breast be full,  
If in thine eye the tear devout should gush,  
His SPIRIT shall behold thee, to thine home  
From hence returning, purified of heart.

Robert Southey



# Jaspar

Jaspar was poor, and want and vice  
Had made his heart like stone,  
And Jaspar look'd with envious eyes  
On riches not his own.

On plunder bent abroad he went  
Towards the close of day,  
And loitered on the lonely road  
Impatient for his prey.

No traveller came, he loiter'd long  
And often look'd around,  
And paus'd and listen'd eagerly  
To catch some coming sound.

He sat him down beside the stream  
That crossed the lonely way,  
So fair a scene might well have charm'd  
All evil thoughts away;

He sat beneath a willow tree  
That cast a trembling shade,  
The gentle river full in front  
A little island made,

Where pleasantly the moon-beam shone  
Upon the poplar trees,  
Whose shadow on the stream below  
Play'd slowly to the breeze.

He listen'd--and he heard the wind  
That waved the willow tree;  
He heard the waters flow along  
And murmur quietly.

He listen'd for the traveller's tread,  
The nightingale sung sweet,--  
He started up, for now he heard  
The sound of coming feet;

He started up and graspt a stake  
And waited for his prey;  
There came a lonely traveller  
And Jaspar crost his way.

But Jaspar's threats and curses fail'd  
The traveller to appal,  
He would not lightly yield the purse  
That held his little all.

Awhile he struggled, but he strove  
With Jaspar's strength in vain;  
Beneath his blows he fell and groan'd,  
And never spoke again.

He lifted up the murdered man  
And plunged him in the flood,  
And in the running waters then  
He cleansed his hands from blood.

The waters closed around the corpse  
And cleansed his hands from gore,  
The willow waved, the stream flowed on  
And murmured as before.

There was no human eye had seen  
The blood the murderer spilt,  
And Jaspar's conscience never knew  
The avenging goad of guilt.

And soon the ruffian had consum'd  
The gold he gain'd so ill,  
And years of secret guilt pass'd on  
And he was needy still.

One eve beside the alehouse fire  
He sat as it befell,  
When in there came a labouring man  
Whom Jaspar knew full well.

He sat him down by Jaspar's side

A melancholy man,  
For spite of honest toil, the world  
Went hard with Jonathan.

His toil a little earn'd, and he  
With little was content,  
But sickness on his wife had fallen  
And all he had was spent.

Then with his wife and little ones  
He shared the scanty meal,  
And saw their looks of wretchedness,  
And felt what wretches feel.

That very morn the Landlord's power  
Had seized the little left,  
And now the sufferer found himself  
Of every thing bereft.

He lent his head upon his hand,  
His elbow on his knee,  
And so by Jaspar's side he sat  
And not a word said he.

Nay--why so downcast? Jaspar cried,  
Come--cheer up Jonathan!  
Drink neighbour drink! 'twill warm thy heart,  
Come! come! take courage man!

He took the cup that Jaspar gave  
And down he drain'd it quick  
I have a wife, said Jonathan,  
And she is deadly sick.

She has no bed to lie upon,  
I saw them take her bed.  
And I have children--would to God  
That they and I were dead!

Our Landlord he goes home to night  
And he will sleep in peace.  
I would that I were in my grave

For there all troubles cease.

In vain I pray'd him to forbear  
Tho' wealth enough has he--  
God be to him as merciless  
As he has been to me!

When Jaspar saw the poor man's soul  
On all his ills intent,  
He plied him with the heartening cup  
And with him forth he went.

This landlord on his homeward road  
'Twere easy now to meet.  
The road is lonesome--Jonathan,  
And vengeance, man! is sweet.

He listen'd to the tempter's voice  
The thought it made him start.  
His head was hot, and wretchedness  
Had hardened now his heart.

Along the lonely road they went  
And waited for their prey,  
They sat them down beside the stream  
That crossed the lonely way.

They sat them down beside the stream  
And never a word they said,  
They sat and listen'd silently  
To hear the traveller's tread.

The night was calm, the night was dark,  
No star was in the sky,  
The wind it waved the willow boughs,  
The stream flowed quietly.

The night was calm, the air was still,  
Sweet sung the nightingale,  
The soul of Jonathan was sooth'd,  
His heart began to fail.

'Tis weary waiting here, he cried,  
And now the hour is late,--  
Methinks he will not come to night,  
'Tis useless more to wait.

Have patience man! the ruffian said,  
A little we may wait,  
But longer shall his wife expect  
Her husband at the gate.

Then Jonathan grew sick at heart,  
My conscience yet is clear,  
Jaspar--it is not yet too late--  
I will not linger here.

How now! cried Jaspar, why I thought  
Thy conscience was asleep.  
No more such qualms, the night is dark,  
The river here is deep,

What matters that, said Jonathan,  
Whose blood began to freeze,  
When there is one above whose eye  
The deeds of darkness sees?

We are safe enough, said Jaspar then  
If that be all thy fear;  
Nor eye below, nor eye above  
Can pierce the darkness here.

That instant as the murderer spake  
There came a sudden light;  
Strong as the mid-day sun it shone,  
Though all around was night.

It hung upon the willow tree,  
It hung upon the flood,  
It gave to view the poplar isle  
And all the scene of blood.

The traveller who journies there  
He surely has espied

A madman who has made his home  
Upon the river's side.

His cheek is pale, his eye is wild,  
His look bespeaks despair;  
For Jaspar since that hour has made  
His home unshelter'd there.

And fearful are his dreams at night  
And dread to him the day;  
He thinks upon his untold crime  
And never dares to pray.

The summer suns, the winter storms,  
O'er him unheeded roll,  
For heavy is the weight of blood  
Upon the maniac's soul.

Robert Southey

# Lord William

No eye beheld when William plunged  
Young Edmund in the stream,  
No human ear but William's heard  
Young Edmund's drowning scream.

Submissive all the vassals own'd  
The murderer for their Lord,  
And he, the rightful heir, possessed  
The house of Erlingford.

The ancient house of Erlingford  
Stood midst a fair domain,  
And Severn's ample waters near  
Roll'd through the fertile plain.

And often the way-faring man  
Would love to linger there,  
Forgetful of his onward road  
To gaze on scenes so fair.

But never could Lord William dare  
To gaze on Severn's stream;  
In every wind that swept its waves  
He heard young Edmund scream.

In vain at midnight's silent hour  
Sleep closed the murderer's eyes,  
In every dream the murderer saw  
Young Edmund's form arise.

In vain by restless conscience driven  
Lord William left his home,  
Far from the scenes that saw his guilt,  
In pilgrimage to roam.

To other climes the pilgrim fled,  
But could not fly despair,  
He sought his home again, but peace  
Was still a stranger there.

Each hour was tedious long, yet swift  
The months appear'd to roll;  
And now the day return'd that shook  
With terror William's soul.

A day that William never felt  
Return without dismay,  
For well had conscience kalendered  
Young Edmund's dying day.

A fearful day was that! the rains  
Fell fast, with tempest roar,  
And the swoln tide of Severn spread  
Far on the level shore.

In vain Lord William sought the feast  
In vain he quaff'd the bowl,  
And strove with noisy mirth to drown  
The anguish of his soul.

The tempest as its sudden swell  
In gusty howlings came,  
With cold and death-like feelings seem'd  
To thrill his shuddering frame.

Reluctant now, as night came on,  
His lonely couch he prest,  
And wearied out, he sunk to sleep,  
To sleep, but not to rest.

Beside that couch his brother's form  
Lord Edmund seem'd to stand,  
Such and so pale as when in death  
He grasp'd his brother's hand;

Such and so pale his face as when  
With faint and faltering tongue,  
To William's care, a dying charge  
He left his orphan son.

'I bade thee with a father's love



My orphan Edmund guard--  
Well William hast thou kept thy charge!  
Now take thy due reward.'

He started up, each limb convuls'd  
With agonizing fear,  
He only heard the storm of night--  
'Twas music to his ear.

When lo! the voice of loud alarm  
His inmost soul appals,  
What ho! Lord William rise in haste!  
The water saps thy walls!

He rose in haste, beneath the walls  
He saw the flood appear,  
It hemm'd him round, 'twas midnight now,  
No human aid was near.

He heard the shout of joy, for now  
A boat approach'd the wall,  
And eager to the welcome aid  
They crowd for safety all.

My boat is small, the boatman cried,  
This dangerous haste forbear!  
Wait other aid, this little bark  
But one from hence can bear.

Lord William leap'd into the boat,  
Haste--haste to yonder shore!  
And ample wealth shall well reward,  
Ply swift and strong the oar.

The boatman plied the oar, the boat  
Went light along the stream,  
Sudden Lord William heard a cry  
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

The boatman paus'd, methought I heard  
A child's distressful cry!  
'Twas but the howling wind of night

Lord William made reply.

Haste haste--ply swift and strong the oar!  
Haste haste across the stream!  
Again Lord William heard a cry  
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

I heard a child's distressful scream  
The boatman cried again.  
Nay hasten on--the night is dark--  
And we should search in vain.

Oh God! Lord William dost thou know  
How dreadful 'tis to die?  
And can'st thou without pity hear  
A child's expiring cry?

How horrible it is to sink  
Beneath the chilly stream,  
To stretch the powerless arms in vain,  
In vain for help to scream?

The shriek again was heard. It came  
More deep, more piercing loud,  
That instant o'er the flood the moon  
Shone through a broken cloud.

And near them they beheld a child,  
Upon a crag he stood,  
A little crag, and all around  
Was spread the rising flood.

The boatman plied the oar, the boat  
Approach'd his resting place,  
The moon-beam shone upon the child  
And show'd how pale his face.

Now reach thine hand! the boatman cried  
Lord William reach and save!  
The child stretch'd forth his little hands  
To grasp the hand he gave.

Then William shriek'd; the hand he touch'd  
Was cold and damp and dead!  
He felt young Edmund in his arms  
A heavier weight than lead.

The boat sunk down, the murderer sunk  
Beneath the avenging stream;  
He rose, he scream'd, no human ear  
Heard William's drowning scream.

Robert Southey

# Mary - A Ballad

Author Note: The story of the following ballad was related to me, when a school boy, as a fact which had really happened in the North of England. I have adopted the metre of Mr. Lewis's Alonzo and Imogene--a poem deservedly popular.

I.

Who is she, the poor Maniac, whose wildly-fix'd eyes  
Seem a heart overcharged to express?  
She weeps not, yet often and deeply she sighs,  
She never complains, but her silence implies  
The composure of settled distress.

II.

No aid, no compassion the Maniac will seek,  
Cold and hunger awake not her care:  
Thro' her rags do the winds of the winter blow bleak  
On her poor withered bosom half bare, and her cheek  
Has the deathly pale hue of despair.

III.

Yet chearful and happy, nor distant the day,  
Poor Mary the Maniac has been;  
The Traveller remembers who journeyed this way  
No damsel so lovely, no damsel so gay  
As Mary the Maid of the Inn.

IV.

Her chearful address fill'd the guests with delight  
As she welcomed them in with a smile:  
Her heart was a stranger to childish affright,  
And Mary would walk by the Abbey at night

When the wind whistled down the dark aisle.

V.

She loved, and young Richard had settled the day,  
And she hoped to be happy for life;  
But Richard was idle and worthless, and they  
Who knew him would pity poor Mary and say  
That she was too good for his wife.

VI.

'Twas in autumn, and stormy and dark was the night,  
And fast were the windows and door;  
Two guests sat enjoying the fire that burnt bright,  
And smoking in silence with tranquil delight  
They listen'd to hear the wind roar.

VII.

"Tis pleasant," cried one, "seated by the fire side  
"To hear the wind whistle without."  
"A fine night for the Abbey!" his comrade replied,  
"Methinks a man's courage would now be well tried  
"Who should wander the ruins about.

VIII.

"I myself, like a school-boy, should tremble to hear  
"The hoarse ivy shake over my head;  
"And could fancy I saw, half persuaded by fear,  
"Some ugly old Abbot's white spirit appear,  
"For this wind might awaken the dead!"

IX.

"I'll wager a dinner," the other one cried,

"That Mary would venture there now."  
"Then wager and lose!" with a sneer he replied,  
"I'll warrant she'd fancy a ghost by her side,  
"And faint if she saw a white cow."

X.

"Will Mary this charge on her courage allow?"  
His companion exclaim'd with a smile;  
"I shall win, for I know she will venture there now,  
"And earn a new bonnet by bringing a bough  
"From the elder that grows in the aisle."

XI.

With fearless good humour did Mary comply,  
And her way to the Abbey she bent;  
The night it was dark, and the wind it was high  
And as hollowly howling it swept thro' the sky  
She shiver'd with cold as she went.

XII.

O'er the path so well known still proceeded the Maid  
Where the Abbey rose dim on the sight,  
Thro' the gate-way she entered, she felt not afraid  
Yet the ruins were lonely and wild, and their shade  
Seem'd to deepen the gloom of the night.

XIII.

All around her was silent, save when the rude blast  
Howl'd dismally round the old pile;  
Over weed-cover'd fragments still fearless she past,  
And arrived in the innermost ruin at last  
Where the elder tree grew in the aisle.

XIV.

Well-pleas'd did she reach it, and quickly drew near  
And hastily gather'd the bough:  
When the sound of a voice seem'd to rise on her ear,  
She paus'd, and she listen'd, all eager to hear,  
Aud her heart panted fearfully now.

XV.

The wind blew, the hoarse ivy shook over her head,  
She listen'd,--nought else could she hear.  
The wind ceas'd, her heart sunk in her bosom with dread  
For she heard in the ruins distinctly the tread  
Of footsteps approaching her near.

XVI.

Behind a wide column half breathless with fear  
She crept to conceal herself there:  
That instant the moon o'er a dark cloud shone clear,  
And she saw in the moon-light two ruffians appear  
And between them a corpse did they bear.

XVII.

Then Mary could feel her heart-blood curdle cold!  
Again the rough wind hurried by,--  
It blew off the hat of the one, and behold  
Even close to the feet of poor Mary it roll'd,--  
She felt, and expected to die.

XVIII.

"Curse the hat!" he exclaims. "Nay come on and first hide  
"The dead body," his comrade replies.  
She beheld them in safety pass on by her side,  
She seizes the hat, fear her courage supplied,

And fast thro' the Abbey she flies.

XIX.

She ran with wild speed, she rush'd in at the door,  
She gazed horribly eager around,  
Then her limbs could support their faint burthen no more,  
And exhausted and breathless she sunk on the floor  
Unable to utter a sound.

XX.

Ere yet her pale lips could the story impart,  
For a moment the hat met her view;--  
Her eyes from that object convulsively start,  
For--oh God what cold horror then thrill'd thro' her heart,  
When the name of her Richard she knew!

XXI.

Where the old Abbey stands, on the common hard by  
His gibbet is now to be seen.  
Not far from the road it engages the eye,  
The Traveller beholds it, and thinks with a sigh  
Of poor Mary the Maid of the Inn.

Robert Southey



## Metrical Letter, Written From London.

Margaret! my Cousin!--nay, you must not smile;  
I love the homely and familiar phrase;  
And I will call thee Cousin Margaret,  
However quaint amid the measured line  
The good old term appears. Oh! it looks ill  
When delicate tongues disclaim old terms of kin,  
Sirring and Madaming as civilly  
As if the road between the heart and lips  
Were such a weary and Laplandish way  
That the poor travellers came to the red gates  
Half frozen. Trust me Cousin Margaret,  
For many a day my Memory has played  
The creditor with me on your account,  
And made me shame to think that I should owe  
So long the debt of kindness. But in truth,  
Like Christian on his pilgrimage, I bear  
So heavy a pack of business, that albeit  
I toil on mainly, in our twelve hours race  
Time leaves me distanced. Loath indeed were I  
That for a moment you should lay to me  
Unkind neglect; mine, Margaret, is a heart  
That smokes not, yet methinks there should be some  
Who know how warm it beats. I am not one  
Who can play off my smiles and courtesies  
To every Lady of her lap dog tired  
Who wants a play-thing; I am no sworn friend  
Of half-an-hour, as apt to leave as love;  
Mine are no mushroom feelings that spring up  
At once without a seed and take no root,  
Wiseliest distrusted. In a narrow sphere  
The little circle of domestic life  
I would be known and loved; the world beyond  
Is not for me. But Margaret, sure I think  
That you should know me well, for you and I  
Grew up together, and when we look back  
Upon old times our recollections paint  
The same familiar faces. Did I wield  
The wand of Merlin's magic I would make  
Brave witchcraft. We would have a faery ship,

Aye, a new Ark, as in that other flood  
That cleansed the sons of Anak from the earth,  
The Sylphs should waft us to some goodly isle  
Like that where whilome old Apollidon  
Built up his blameless spell; and I would bid  
The Sea Nymphs pile around their coral bowers,  
That we might stand upon the beach, and mark  
The far-off breakers shower their silver spray,  
And hear the eternal roar whose pleasant sound  
Told us that never mariner should reach  
Our quiet coast. In such a blessed isle  
We might renew the days of infancy,  
And Life like a long childhood pass away,  
Without one care. It may be, Margaret,  
That I shall yet be gathered to my friends,  
For I am not of those who live estranged  
Of choice, till at the last they join their race  
In the family vault. If so, if I should lose,  
Like my old friend the Pilgrim, this huge pack  
So heavy on my shoulders, I and mine  
Will end our pilgrimage most pleasantly.  
If not, if I should never get beyond  
This Vanity town, there is another world  
Where friends will meet. And often, Margaret,  
I gaze at night into the boundless sky,  
And think that I shall there be born again,  
The exalted native of some better star;  
And like the rude American I hope  
To find in Heaven the things I loved on earth.

Robert Southey

# Musings On A Landscape Of Gaspar Poussin

Poussin! most pleasantly thy pictur'd scenes  
Beguile the lonely hour; I sit and gaze  
With lingering eye, till charmed FANCY makes  
The lovely landscape live, and the rapt soul  
From the foul haunts of herded humankind  
Flies far away with spirit speed, and tastes  
The untainted air, that with the lively hue  
Of health and happiness illumines the cheek  
Of mountain LIBERTY. My willing soul  
All eager follows on thy faery flights  
FANCY! best friend; whose blessed witcheries  
With loveliest prospects cheat the traveller  
O'er the long wearying desart of the world.  
Nor dost thou FANCY with such magic mock  
My heart, as, demon-born, old Merlin knew,  
Or Alquif, or Zarzafiel's sister sage,  
Whose vengeful anguish for so many a year  
Held in the jacinth sepulchre entranced  
Lisvart and Perion, pride of chivalry.  
Friend of my lonely hours! thou leadest me  
To such calm joys as Nature wise and good  
Proffers in vain to all her wretched sons;  
Her wretched sons who pine with want amid  
The abundant earth, and blindly bow them down  
Before the Moloch shrines of WEALTH and POWER,  
AUTHORS of EVIL. Oh it is most sweet  
To medicine with thy wiles the wearied heart,  
Sick of reality. The little pile  
That tops the summit of that craggy hill  
Shall be my dwelling; craggy is the hill  
And steep, yet thro' yon hazels upward leads  
The easy path, along whose winding way  
Now close embowered I hear the unseen stream  
Dash down, anon behold its sparkling foam  
Gleam thro' the thicket; and ascending on  
Now pause me to survey the goodly vale  
That opens on my vision. Half way up  
Pleasant it were upon some broad smooth rock  
To sit and sun me, and look down below

And watch the goatherd down that high-bank'd path  
Urging his flock grotesque; and bidding now  
His lean rough dog from some near cliff to drive  
The straggler; while his barkings loud and quick  
Amid their trembling bleat arising oft,  
Fainter and fainter from the hollow road  
Send their far echoes, till the waterfall,  
Hoarse bursting from the cavern'd cliff beneath,  
Their dying murmurs drown. A little yet  
Onward, and I have gain'd the upmost height.  
Fair spreads the vale below: I see the stream  
Stream radiant on beneath the noontide sky.  
Where the town-spires behind the castle towers  
Rise graceful; brown the mountain in its shade,  
Whose circling grandeur, part by mists conceal'd,  
Part with white rocks resplendant in the sun,  
Should bound mine eyes; aye and my wishes too,  
For I would have no hope or fear beyond.  
The empty turmoil of the worthless world,  
Its vanities and vices would not vex  
My quiet heart. The traveller, who beheld  
The low tower of the little pile, might deem  
It were the house of GOD: nor would he err  
So deeming, for that home would be the home  
Of PEACE and LOVE, and they would hallow it  
To HIM. Oh life of blessedness! to reap  
The fruit of honorable toil, and bound  
Our wishes with our wants! delightful Thoughts  
That sooth the solitude of maniac HOPE,  
Ye leave her to reality awak'd,  
Like the poor captive, from some fleeting dream  
Of friends and liberty and home restor'd,  
Startled, and listening as the midnight storm  
Beats hard and heavy thro' his dungeon bars.

Robert Southey

# My Days Among The Dead Are Past

My days among the Dead are past;  
Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
The mighty minds of old;  
My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,  
And seek relief in woe;  
And while I understand and feel  
How much to them I owe,  
My cheeks have often been bedew'd  
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead, with them  
I live in long-past years,  
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
Partake their hopes and fears,  
And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead, anon  
My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all Futurity;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.

Robert Southey

# Ode Written On The First Of December

Tho' now no more the musing ear  
Delights to listen to the breeze  
That lingers o'er the green wood shade,  
I love thee Winter! well.

Sweet are the harmonies of Spring,  
Sweet is the summer's evening gale,  
Pleasant the autumnal winds that shake  
The many-colour'd grove.

And pleasant to the sober'd soul  
The silence of the wintry scene,  
When Nature shrouds her in her trance

Not undelightful now to roam  
The wild heath sparkling on the sight;  
Not undelightful now to pace  
The forest's ample rounds;

And see the spangled branches shine,  
And mark the moss of many a hue  
That varies the old tree's brown bark,  
Or o'er the grey stone spreads.

The cluster'd berries claim the eye  
O'er the bright hollies gay green leaves,  
The ivy round the leafless oak  
Clasps its full foliage close.

So VIRTUE diffident of strength  
Clings to RELIGION'S firmer aid,  
And by RELIGION'S aid upheld  
Endures calamity.

Nor void of beauties now the spring,  
Whose waters hid from summer sun  
Have sooth'd the thirsty pilgrim's ear  
With more than melody.

The green moss shines with icy glare,  
The long grass bends its spear-like form,  
And lovely is the silvery scene  
When faint the sunbeams smile.

Reflection too may love the hour  
When Nature, hid in Winter's grave,  
No more expands the bursting bud  
Or bids the flowret bloom.

For Nature soon in Spring's best charms  
Shall rise reviv'd from Winter's grave.  
Again expand the bursting bud,  
And bid the flowret bloom.

Robert Southey

# Ode Written On The First Of January

Come melancholy Moralizer--come!  
Gather with me the dark and wintry wreath;  
With me engarland now  
The SEPULCHRE OF TIME!

Come Moralizer to the funeral song!  
I pour the dirge of the Departed Days,  
For well the funeral song  
Befits this solemn hour.

But hark! even now the merry bells ring round  
With clamorous joy to welcome in this day,  
This consecrated day,  
To Mirth and Indolence.

Mortal! whilst Fortune with benignant hand  
Fills to the brim thy cup of happiness,  
Whilst her unclouded sun  
Illumes thy summer day,

Canst thou rejoice--rejoice that Time flies fast?  
That Night shall shadow soon thy summer sun?  
That swift the stream of Years  
Rolls to Eternity?

If thou hast wealth to gratify each wish,  
If Power be thine, remember what thou art--  
Remember thou art Man,  
And Death thine heritage!

Hast thou known Love? does Beauty's better sun  
Cheer thy fond heart with no capricious smile,  
Her eye all eloquence,  
Her voice all harmony?

Oh state of happiness! hark how the gale  
Moans deep and hollow o'er the leafless grove!  
Winter is dark and cold--  
Where now the charms of Spring?



Sayst thou that Fancy paints the future scene  
In hues too sombrous? that the dark-stol'd Maid  
With stern and frowning front  
Appals the shuddering soul?

And would'st thou bid me court her faery form  
When, as she sports her in some happier mood,  
Her many-colour'd robes  
Dance varying to the Sun?

Ah vainly does the Pilgrim, whose long road  
Leads o'er the barren mountain's storm-vext height,  
With anxious gaze survey  
The fruitful far-off vale.

Oh there are those who love the pensive song  
To whom all sounds of Mirth are dissonant!  
There are who at this hour  
Will love to contemplate!

For hopeless Sorrow hails the lapse of Time,  
Rejoicing when the fading orb of day  
Is sunk again in night,  
That one day more is gone.

And he who bears Affliction's heavy load  
With patient piety, well pleas'd he knows  
The World a pilgrimage,  
The Grave the inn of rest.

Robert Southey

# On The Death Of A Favourite Old Spaniel

And they have drown'd thee then at last! poor Phillis!  
The burthen of old age was heavy on thee.  
And yet thou should'st have lived! what tho' thine eye  
Was dim, and watch'd no more with eager joy  
The wonted call that on thy dull sense sunk  
With fruitless repetition, the warm Sun  
Would still have cheer'd thy slumber, thou didst love  
To lick the hand that fed thee, and tho' past  
Youth's active season, even Life itself  
Was comfort. Poor old friend! most earnestly  
Would I have pleaded for thee: thou hadst been  
Still the companion of my childish sports,  
And, as I roam'd o'er Avon's woody clifts,  
From many a day-dream has thy short quick bark  
Recall'd my wandering soul. I have beguil'd  
Often the melancholy hours at school,  
Sour'd by some little tyrant, with the thought  
Of distant home, and I remember'd then  
Thy faithful fondness: for not mean the joy,  
Returning at the pleasant holydays,  
I felt from thy dumb welcome. Pensively  
Sometimes have I remark'd thy slow decay,  
Feeling myself changed too, and musing much  
On many a sad vicissitude of Life!  
Ah poor companion! when thou followedst last  
Thy master's parting footsteps to the gate  
That clos'd for ever on him, thou didst lose  
Thy truest friend, and none was left to plead  
For the old age of brute fidelity!  
But fare thee well! mine is no narrow creed,  
And HE who gave thee being did not frame  
The mystery of life to be the sport  
Of merciless man! there is another world  
For all that live and move--a better one!  
Where the proud bipeds, who would fain confine  
INFINITE GOODNESS to the little bounds  
Of their own charity, may envy thee!



## Poems On The Slave Trade - Sonnet I

Hold your mad hands! for ever on your plain  
Must the gorged vulture clog his beak with blood?  
For ever must your Nigers tainted flood  
Roll to the ravenous shark his banquet slain?  
Hold your mad hands! what daemon prompts to rear  
The arm of Slaughter? on your savage shore  
Can hell-sprung Glory claim the feast of gore,  
With laurels water'd by the widow's tear  
Wreathing his helmet crown? lift high the spear!  
And like the desolating whirlwinds sweep,  
Plunge ye yon bark of anguish in the deep;  
For the pale fiend, cold-hearted Commerce there  
Breathes his gold-gender'd pestilence afar,  
And calls to share the prey his kindred Daemon War.

Robert Southey

## Poems On The Slave Trade - Sonnet II

Why dost thou beat thy breast and rend thine hair,  
And to the deaf sea pour thy frantic cries?  
Before the gale the laden vessel flies;  
The Heavens all-favoring smile, the breeze is fair;  
Hark to the clamors of the exulting crew!  
Hark how their thunders mock the patient skies!  
Why dost thou shriek and strain thy red-swoln eyes  
As the white sail dim lessens from thy view?  
Go pine in want and anguish and despair,  
There is no mercy found in human-kind--  
Go Widow to thy grave and rest thee there!  
But may the God of Justice bid the wind  
Whelm that curst bark beneath the mountain wave,  
And bless with Liberty and Death the Slave!

Robert Southey

## Poems On The Slave Trade - Sonnet Iii

Oh he is worn with toil! the big drops run  
Down his dark cheek; hold--hold thy merciless hand,  
Pale tyrant! for beneath thy hard command  
O'erwearied Nature sinks. The scorching Sun,  
As pityless as proud Prosperity,  
Darts on him his full beams; gasping he lies  
Arraigning with his looks the patient skies,  
While that inhuman trader lifts on high  
The mangling scourge. Oh ye who at your ease  
Sip the blood-sweeten'd beverage! thoughts like these  
Haply ye scorn: I thank thee Gracious God!  
That I do feel upon my cheek the glow  
Of indignation, when beneath the rod  
A sable brother writhes in silent woe.

Robert Southey

## Poems On The Slave Trade - Sonnet Iv

'Tis night; the mercenary tyrants sleep  
As undisturb'd as Justice! but no more  
The wretched Slave, as on his native shore,  
Rests on his reedy couch: he wakes to weep!  
Tho' thro' the toil and anguish of the day  
No tear escap'd him, not one suffering groan  
Beneath the twisted thong, he weeps alone  
In bitterness; thinking that far away  
Tho' the gay negroes join the midnight song,  
Tho' merriment resounds on Niger's shore,  
She whom he loves far from the chearful throng  
Stands sad, and gazes from her lowly door  
With dim grown eye, silent and woe-begone,  
And weeps for him who will return no more.

Robert Southey

## Poems On The Slave Trade - Sonnet V

Did then the bold Slave rear at last the Sword  
Of Vengeance? drench'd he deep its thirsty blade  
In the cold bosom of his tyrant lord?  
Oh! who shall blame him? thro' the midnight shade  
Still o'er his tortur'd memory rush'd the thought  
Of every past delight; his native grove,  
Friendship's best joys, and Liberty and Love,  
All lost for ever! then Remembrance wrought  
His soul to madness; round his restless bed  
Freedom's pale spectre stalk'd, with a stern smile  
Pointing the wounds of slavery, the while  
She shook her chains and hung her sullen head:  
No more on Heaven he calls with fruitless breath,  
But sweetens with revenge, the draught of death.

Robert Southey



## Poems On The Slave Trade - Sonnet Vi

High in the air expos'd the Slave is hung  
To all the birds of Heaven, their living food!  
He groans not, tho' awak'd by that fierce Sun  
New torturers live to drink their parent blood!  
He groans not, tho' the gorging Vulture tear  
The quivering fibre! hither gaze O ye  
Who tore this Man from Peace and Liberty!  
Gaze hither ye who weigh with scrupulous care  
The right and prudent; for beyond the grave  
There is another world! and call to mind,  
Ere your decrees proclaim to all mankind  
Murder is legalized, that there the Slave  
Before the Eternal, "thunder-tongued shall plead  
"Against the deep damnation of your deed."

Robert Southey

# Porlock

Porlock! thy verdant vale so fair to sight,  
Thy lofty hills which fern and furze imbrown,  
The waters that roll musically down  
Thy woody glens, the traveller with delight  
Recalls to memory, and the channel grey  
Circling its surges in thy level bay.  
Porlock! I shall forget thee not,  
Here by the unwelcome summer rain confined;  
But often shall hereafter call to mind  
How here, a patient prisoner, 'twas my lot  
To wear the lonely, lingering close of day,  
Making my sonnet by the alehouse fire,  
Whilst Idleness and Solitude inspire  
Dull rhymes to pass the duller hours away.

Robert Southey

# Rudiger - A Ballad

Author Note: Divers Princes and Noblemen being assembled in a beautiful and fair

Palace, which was situate upon the river Rhine, they beheld a boat or small barge make toward the shore, drawn by a Swan in a silver chain, the one end fastened about her neck, the other to the vessel; and in it an unknown soldier, a man of a comely personage and graceful presence, who stept upon the shore; which done, the boat guided by the Swan left him, and floated down the river. This man fell afterward in league with a fair gentlewoman, married her, and by her had many children. After some years, the same Swan came with the same barge into the same place; the soldier entering into it, was carried thence the way he came, left wife, children and family, and was never seen amongst them after.

Now who can judge this to be other than one of those spirits that are named Incubi? says Thomas Heywood. I have adopted his story, but not his solution, making the unknown soldier not an evil spirit, but one who had purchased happiness of a malevolent being, by the promised sacrifice of his first-born child.

.....

Bright on the mountain's heathy slope  
The day's last splendors shine  
And rich with many a radiant hue  
Gleam gayly on the Rhine.

And many a one from Waldhurst's walls  
Along the river stroll'd,  
As ruffling o'er the pleasant stream  
The evening gales came cold.

So as they stray'd a swan they saw  
Sail stately up and strong,  
And by a silver chain she drew  
A little boat along,

Whose streamer to the gentle breeze  
Long floating fluttered light,  
Beneath whose crimson canopy

There lay reclin'd a knight.

With arching crest and swelling breast  
On sail'd the stately swan  
And lightly up the parting tide  
The little boat came on.

And onward to the shore they drew  
And leapt to land the knight,  
And down the stream the swan-drawn boat  
Fell soon beyond the sight.

Was never a Maid in Waldhurst's walls  
Might match with Margaret,  
Her cheek was fair, her eyes were dark,  
Her silken locks like jet.

And many a rich and noble youth  
Had strove to win the fair,  
But never a rich or noble youth  
Could rival Rudiger.

At every tilt and turney he  
Still bore away the prize,  
For knightly feats superior still  
And knightly courtesies.

His gallant feats, his looks, his love,  
Soon won the willing fair,  
And soon did Margaret become  
The wife of Rudiger.

Like morning dreams of happiness  
Fast roll'd the months away,  
For he was kind and she was kind  
And who so blest as they?

Yet Rudiger would sometimes sit  
Absorb'd in silent thought  
And his dark downward eye would seem  
With anxious meaning fraught;

But soon he rais'd his looks again  
And smil'd his cares away,  
And mid the hall of gaiety  
Was none like him so gay.

And onward roll'd the waining months,  
The hour appointed came,  
And Margaret her Rudiger  
Hail'd with a father's name.

But silently did Rudiger  
The little infant see,  
And darkly on the babe he gaz'd  
And very sad was he.

And when to bless the little babe  
The holy Father came,  
To cleanse the stains of sin away  
In Christ's redeeming name,

Then did the cheek of Rudiger  
Assume a death-pale hue,  
And on his clammy forehead stood  
The cold convulsive dew;

And faltering in his speech he bade  
The Priest the rites delay,  
Till he could, to right health restor'd,  
Enjoy the festive day.

When o'er the many-tinted sky  
He saw the day decline,  
He called upon his Margaret  
To walk beside the Rhine.

"And we will take the little babe,  
"For soft the breeze that blows,  
"And the wild murmurs of the stream  
"Will lull him to repose."

So forth together did they go,  
The evening breeze was mild,

And Rudiger upon his arm  
Did pillow the sweet child.

And many a one from Waldhurst's walls  
Along the banks did roam,  
But soon the evening wind came cold,  
And all betook them home.

Yet Rudiger in silent mood  
Along the banks would roam,  
Nor aught could Margaret prevail  
To turn his footsteps home.

"Oh turn thee--turn thee Rudiger,  
"The rising mists behold,  
"The evening wind is damp and chill,  
"The little babe is cold!"

"Now hush thee--hush thee Margaret,  
"The mists will do no harm,  
"And from the wind the little babe  
"Lies sheltered on my arm."

"Oh turn thee--turn thee Rudiger,  
"Why onward wilt thou roam?  
"The moon is up, the night is cold,  
"And we are far from home."

He answered not, for now he saw  
A Swan come sailing strong,  
And by a silver chain she drew  
A little boat along.

To shore they came, and to the boat  
Fast leapt he with the child,  
And in leapt Margaret--breathless now  
And pale with fear and wild.

With arching crest and swelling breast  
On sail'd the stately swan,  
And lightly down the rapid tide  
The little boat went on.

The full-orb'd moon that beam'd around  
Pale splendor thro' the night,  
Cast through the crimson canopy  
A dim-discoloured light.

And swiftly down the hurrying stream  
In silence still they sail,  
And the long streamer fluttering fast  
Flapp'd to the heavy gale.

And he was mute in sullen thought  
And she was mute with fear,  
Nor sound but of the parting tide  
Broke on the listening ear.

The little babe began to cry  
And waked his mother's care,  
"Now give to me the little babe  
"For God's sake, Rudiger!"

"Now hush thee, hush thee Margaret!  
"Nor my poor heart distress--  
"I do but pay perforce the price  
"Of former happiness.

"And hush thee too my little babe,  
"Thy cries so feeble cease:  
"Lie still, lie still;--a little while  
"And thou shalt be at peace."

So as he spake to land they drew,  
And swift he stept on shore,  
And him behind did Margaret  
Close follow evermore.

It was a place all desolate,  
Nor house nor tree was there,  
And there a rocky mountain rose  
Barren, and bleak, and bare.

And at its base a cavern yawn'd,

No eye its depth might view,  
For in the moon-beam shining round  
That darkness darker grew.

Cold Horror crept thro' Margaret's blood,  
Her heart it paus'd with fear,  
When Rudiger approach'd the cave  
And cried, "lo I am here!"

A deep sepulchral sound the cave  
Return'd "lo I am here!"  
And black from out the cavern gloom  
Two giant arms appear.

And Rudiger approach'd and held  
The little infant nigh;  
Then Margaret shriek'd, and gather'd then  
New powers from agony.

And round the baby fast and firm  
Her trembling arms she folds,  
And with a strong convulsive grasp  
The little infant holds.

"Now help me, Jesus!" loud she cries.  
And loud on God she calls;  
Then from the grasp of Rudiger  
The little infant falls.

And now he shriek'd, for now his frame  
The huge black arms clasp'd round,  
And dragg'd the wretched Rudiger  
Adown the dark profound.

Robert Southey



# Sappho - A Monodrama

Argument.

To leap from the promontory of LEUCADIA was believed by the Greeks to be a remedy for hopeless love, if the self-devoted victim escaped with life. Artemisia lost her life in the dangerous experiment: and Sappho is said thus to have perished, in attempting to cure her passion for Phaon.

SAPPHO

(Scene the promontory of Leucadia.)

This is the spot:--'tis here Tradition says  
That hopeless Love from this high towering rock  
Leaps headlong to Oblivion or to Death.  
Oh 'tis a giddy height! my dizzy head  
Swims at the precipice--'tis death to fall!

Lie still, thou coward heart! this is no time  
To shake with thy strong throbs the frame convuls'd.  
To die,--to be at rest--oh pleasant thought!  
Perchance to leap and live; the soul all still,  
And the wild tempest of the passions husht  
In one deep calm; the heart, no more diseas'd  
By the quick ague fits of hope and fear,  
Quietly cold!

          Presiding Powers look down!

In vain to you I pour'd my earnest prayers,  
In vain I sung your praises: chiefly thou  
VENUS! ungrateful Goddess, whom my lyre  
Hymn'd with such full devotion! Lesbian groves,  
Witness how often at the languid hour  
Of summer twilight, to the melting song  
Ye gave your choral echoes! Grecian Maids  
Who hear with downcast look and flushing cheek  
That lay of love bear witness! and ye Youths,  
Who hang enraptur'd on the empassion'd strain  
Gazing with eloquent eye, even till the heart  
Sinks in the deep delirium! and ye too

Shall witness, unborn Ages! to that song  
Of warmest zeal; ah witness ye, how hard,  
Her fate who hymn'd the votive hymn in vain!  
Ungrateful Goddess! I have hung my lute  
In yonder holy pile: my hand no more  
Shall wake the melodies that fail'd to move  
The heart of Phaon--yet when Rumour tells  
How from Leucadia Sappho hurl'd her down  
A self-devoted victim--he may melt  
Too late in pity, obstinate to love.

Oh haunt his midnight dreams, black NEMESIS!  
Whom, self-conceiving in the inmost depths  
Of CHAOS, blackest NIGHT long-labouring bore,  
When the stern DESTINIES, her elder brood.  
And shapeless DEATH, from that more monstrous birth  
Leapt shuddering! haunt his slumbers, Nemesis,  
Scorch with the fires of Phlegethon his heart,  
Till helpless, hopeless, heaven-abandon'd wretch  
He too shall seek beneath the unfathom'd deep  
To hide him from thy fury.

How the sea

Far distant glitters as the sun-beams smile,  
And gayly wanton o'er its heaving breast  
Phoebus shines forth, nor wears one cloud to mourn  
His votary's sorrows! God of Day shine on--  
By Man despis'd, forsaken by the Gods,  
I supplicate no more.

How many a day,

O pleasant Lesbos! in thy secret streams  
Delighted have I plung'd, from the hot sun  
Screen'd by the o'er-arching groves delightful shade,  
And pillowed on the waters: now the waves  
Shall chill me to repose.

Tremendous height!

Scarce to the brink will these rebellious limbs  
Support me. Hark! how the rude deep below  
Roars round the rugged base, as if it called  
Its long-reluctant victim! I will come.

One leap, and all is over! The deep rest  
Of Death, or tranquil Apathy's dead calm  
Welcome alike to me. Away vain fears!  
Phaon is cold, and why should Sappho live?  
Phaon is cold, or with some fairer one--  
Thought worse than death!

(She throws herself from the precipice.)

Robert Southey

# Sonnet

With wayworn feet a Pilgrim woe-begone  
Life's upward road I journeyed many a day,  
And hymning many a sad yet soothing lay  
Beguil'd my wandering with the charms of song.  
Lonely my heart and rugged was my way,  
Yet often pluck'd I as I past along  
The wild and simple flowers of Poesy,  
And as beseem'd the wayward Fancy's child  
Entwin'd each random weed that pleas'd mine eye.  
Accept the wreath, BELOVED! it is wild  
And rudely garlanded; yet scorn not thou  
The humble offering, where the sad rue weaves  
'Mid gayer flowers its intermingled leaves,  
And I have twin'd the myrtle for thy brow.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 01

Go Valentine and tell that lovely maid  
Whom Fancy still will pourtray to my sight,  
How her Bard lingers in this sullen shade,  
This dreary gloom of dull monastic night.  
Say that from every joy of life remote  
At evening's closing hour he quits the throng,  
Listening alone the ring-dove's plaintive note  
Who pours like him her solitary song.  
Say that her absence calls the sorrowing sigh,  
Say that of all her charms he loves to speak,  
In fancy feels the magic of her eye,  
In fancy views the smile illumine her cheek,  
Courts the lone hour when Silence stills the grove  
And heaves the sigh of Memory and of Love.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 02

Think Valentine, as speeding on thy way  
Homeward thou hastest light of heart along,  
If heavily creep on one little day  
The medley crew of travellers among,  
Think on thine absent friend: reflect that here  
On Life's sad journey comfortless he roves,  
Remote from every scene his heart holds dear,  
From him he values, and from her he loves.  
And when disgusted with the vain and dull  
Whom chance companions of thy way may doom,  
Thy mind, of each domestic comfort full,  
Turns to itself and meditates on home,  
Ah think what Cares must ache within his breast  
Who loaths the lingering road, yet has no home of rest!

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 03

Not to thee Bedford mournful is the tale  
Of days departed. Time in his career  
Arraigns not thee that the neglected year  
Has past unheeded onward. To the vale  
Of years thou journeyest. May the future road  
Be pleasant as the past! and on my friend  
Friendship and Love, best blessings! still attend,  
'Till full of days he reach the calm abode  
Where Nature slumbers. Lovely is the age  
Of Virtue. With such reverence we behold  
The silver hairs, as some grey oak grown old  
That whilome mock'd the rushing tempest's rage  
Now like the monument of strength decayed  
With rarely-sprinkled leaves casting a trembling shade.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 04

What tho' no sculptur'd monument proclaim  
Thy fate-yet Albert in my breast I bear  
Inshrin'd the sad remembrance; yet thy name  
Will fill my throbbing bosom. When DESPAIR  
The child of murdered HOPE, fed on thy heart,  
Loved honored friend, I saw thee sink forlorn  
Pierced to the soul by cold Neglect's keen dart,  
And Penury's hard ills, and pitying Scorn,  
And the dark spectre of departed JOY  
Inhuman MEMORY. Often on thy grave  
Love I the solitary hour to employ  
Thinking on other days; and heave the sigh  
Responsive, when I mark the high grass wave  
Sad sounding as the cold breeze rustles by.

Robert Southey



## Sonnet 05

Hard by the road, where on that little mound  
The high grass rustles to the passing breeze,  
The child of Misery rests her head in peace.  
Pause there in sadness. That unhallowed ground  
Inshrines what once was Isabel. Sleep on  
Sleep on, poor Outcast! lovely was thy cheek,  
And thy mild eye was eloquent to speak  
The soul of Pity. Pale and woe-begone  
Soon did thy fair cheek fade, and thine eye weep  
The tear of anguish for the babe unborn,  
The helpless heir of Poverty and Scorn.  
She drank the draught that chill'd her soul to sleep.  
I pause and wipe the big drop from mine eye,  
Whilst the proud Levite scowls and passes by.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 06

(to a brook near the village of Corston.)

As thus I bend me o'er thy babbling stream  
And watch thy current, Memory's hand pourtrays  
The faint form'd scenes of the departed days,  
Like the far forest by the moon's pale beam  
Dimly descried yet lovely. I have worn  
Upon thy banks the live-long hour away,  
When sportive Childhood wantoned thro' the day,  
Joy'd at the opening splendour of the morn,  
Or as the twilight darken'd, heaved the sigh  
Thinking of distant home; as down my cheek  
At the fond thought slow stealing on, would speak  
The silent eloquence of the full eye.  
Dim are the long past days, yet still they please  
As thy soft sounds half heard, borne on the inconstant breeze.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 07

(to the rainbow)

Mild arch of promise! on the evening sky  
Thou shinest fair with many a lovely ray  
Each in the other melting. Much mine eye  
Delights to linger on thee; for the day,  
Changeful and many-weather'd, seem'd to smile  
Flashing brief splendor thro' its clouds awhile,  
That deepen'd dark anon and fell in rain:  
But pleasant is it now to pause, and view  
Thy various tints of frail and watery hue,  
And think the storm shall not return again.  
Such is the smile that Piety bestows  
On the good man's pale cheek, when he in peace  
Departing gently from a world of woes,  
Anticipates the realm where sorrows cease.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 08

With many a weary step, at length I gain  
Thy summit, Lansdown; and the cool breeze plays,  
Gratefully round my brow, as hence the gaze  
Returns to dwell upon the journeyed plain.  
'Twas a long way and tedious! to the eye  
Tho fair the extended vale, and fair to view  
The falling leaves of many a faded hue,  
That eddy in the wild gust moaning by.  
Even so it fared with Life! in discontent  
Restless thro' Fortune's mingled scenes I went,  
Yet wept to think they would return no more!  
But cease fond heart in such sad thoughts to roam,  
For surely thou ere long shall reach thy home,  
And pleasant is the way that lies before.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 09

Fair is the rising morn when o'er the sky  
The orient sun expands his roseate ray,  
And lovely to the Bard's enthusiast eye  
Fades the meek radiance of departing day;  
But fairer is the smile of one we love,  
Than all the scenes in Nature's ample sway.  
And sweeter than the music of the grove,  
The voice that bids us welcome. Such delight  
EDITH! is mine, escaping to thy sight  
From the hard durance of the empty throng.  
Too swiftly then towards the silent night  
Ye Hours of happiness! ye speed along,  
Whilst I, from all the World's cold cares apart,  
Pour out the feelings of my burthen'd heart.

Robert Southey

## Sonnet 10

How darkly o'er yon far-off mountain frowns  
The gather'd tempest! from that lurid cloud  
The deep-voiced thunders roll, awful and loud  
Tho' distant; while upon the misty downs  
Fast falls in shadowy streaks the pelting rain.  
I never saw so terrible a storm!  
Perhaps some way-worn traveller in vain  
Wraps his torn raiment round his shivering form  
Cold even as Hope within him! I the while  
Pause me in sadness tho' the sunbeams smile  
Cheerily round me. Ah that thus my lot  
Might be with Peace and Solitude assign'd,  
Where I might from some little quiet cot,  
Sigh for the crimes and miseries of mankind!

Robert Southey

# The Battle Of Blenheim

It was a summer evening;  
Old Kaspar's work was done,  
And he before his cottage door  
Was sitting in the sun;  
And by him sported on the green  
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin  
Roll something large and round,  
Which he beside the rivulet  
In playing there had found.  
He came to ask what he had found,  
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,  
Who stood expectant by;  
And then the old man shook his head,  
And with a natural sigh,  
"Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,  
"Who fell in the great victory.

"I find them in the garden,  
For there's many here about;  
And often, when I go to plow,  
The plowshare turns them out;  
For many thousand men," said he,  
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"  
Young Peterkin, he cries;  
And little Wilhelmine looks up  
With wonder-waiting eyes;  
"Now tell us all about the war,  
And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,  
"Who put the French to rout;  
But what they fought each other for,  
I could not well make out;

But everybody said," quoth he,  
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,  
Yon little stream hard by;  
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,  
And he was forced to fly;  
So with his wife and child he fled,  
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round  
Was wasted far and wide,  
And many a childing mother then,  
And new-born baby, died;  
But things like that, you know, must be  
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight  
After the field was won;  
For many thousand bodies here  
Lay rotting in the sun;  
But things like that, you know, must be  
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlboro' won,  
And our good Prince Eugene."  
"Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!"  
Said little Wilhelmine.  
"Nay, nay, my little girl," quoth he;  
"It was a famous victory.

"And everybody praised the Duke  
Who this great fight did win."  
"But what good came of it at last?"  
Quoth little Peterkin.  
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he;  
"But 'twas a famous victory."

Robert Southey



# The Cataract Of Lodore

'How does the water  
Come down at Lodore?'  
My little boy asked me  
Thus, once on a time;  
And moreover he tasked me  
To tell him in rhyme.  
Anon, at the word,  
There first came one daughter,  
And then came another,  
To second and third  
The request of their brother,  
And to hear how the water  
Comes down at Lodore,  
With its rush and its roar,  
As many a time  
They had seen it before.  
So I told them in rhyme,  
For of rhymes I had store;  
And 'twas in my vocation  
For their recreation  
That so I should sing;  
Because I was Laureate  
To them and the King.

From its sources which well  
In the tarn on the fell;  
From its fountains  
In the mountains,  
Its rills and its gills;  
Through moss and through brake,  
It runs and it creeps  
For a while, till it sleeps  
In its own little lake.  
And thence at departing,  
Awakening and starting,  
It runs through the reeds,  
And away it proceeds,  
Through meadow and glade,  
In sun and in shade,

And through the wood-shelter,  
Among crags in its flurry,  
Helter-skelter,  
Hurry-scurry.  
Here it comes sparkling,  
And there it lies darkling;  
Now smoking and frothing  
Its tumult and wrath in,  
Till, in this rapid race  
On which it is bent,  
It reaches the place  
Of its steep descent.

The cataract strong  
Then plunges along,  
Striking and raging  
As if a war waging  
Its caverns and rocks among;  
Rising and leaping,  
Sinking and creeping,  
Swelling and sweeping,  
Showering and springing,  
Flying and flinging,  
Writhing and ringing,  
Eddying and whisking,  
Spouting and frisking,  
Turning and twisting,  
Around and around  
With endless rebound:  
Smiting and fighting,  
A sight to delight in;  
Confounding, astounding,  
Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound.

Collecting, projecting,  
Receding and speeding,  
And shocking and rocking,  
And darting and parting,  
And threading and spreading,  
And whizzing and hissing,  
And dripping and skipping,  
And hitting and splitting,

And shining and twining,  
And rattling and battling,  
And shaking and quaking,  
And pouring and roaring,  
And waving and raving,  
And tossing and crossing,  
And flowing and going,  
And running and stunning,  
And foaming and roaming,  
And dinning and spinning,  
And dropping and hopping,  
And working and jerking,  
And guggling and struggling,  
And heaving and cleaving,  
And moaning and groaning;

And glittering and frittering,  
And gathering and feathering,  
And whitening and brightening,  
And quivering and shivering,  
And hurrying and skurrying,  
And thundering and floundering;

Dividing and gliding and sliding,  
And falling and brawling and sprawling,  
And driving and riving and striving,  
And sprinkling and twinkling and wrinkling,  
And sounding and bounding and rounding,  
And bubbling and troubling and doubling,  
And grumbling and rumbling and tumbling,  
And clattering and battering and shattering;

Retreating and beating and meeting and sheeting,  
Delaying and straying and playing and spraying,  
Advancing and prancing and glancing and dancing,  
Recoiling, turmoiling and toiling and boiling,  
And gleaming and streaming and steaming and beaming,  
And rushing and flushing and brushing and gushing,  
And flapping and rapping and clapping and slapping,  
And curling and whirling and purling and twirling,  
And thumping and plumping and bumping and jumping,  
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing;

And so never ending, but always descending,  
Sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending  
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar, -  
And this way the water comes down at Lodore.

Robert Southey

# The Complaints Of The Poor

And wherefore do the Poor complain?  
The rich man asked of me,--  
Come walk abroad with me, I said  
And I will answer thee.

'Twas evening and the frozen streets  
Were cheerless to behold,  
And we were wrapt and coated well,  
And yet we were a-cold.

We met an old bare-headed man,  
His locks were few and white,  
I ask'd him what he did abroad  
In that cold winter's night:

'Twas bitter keen indeed, he said,  
But at home no fire had he,  
And therefore, he had come abroad  
To ask for charity.

We met a young bare-footed child,  
And she begg'd loud and bold,  
I ask'd her what she did abroad  
When the wind it blew so cold;

She said her father was at home  
And he lay sick a-bed,  
And therefore was it she was sent  
Abroad to beg for bread.

We saw a woman sitting down  
Upon a stone to rest,  
She had a baby at her back  
And another at her breast;

I ask'd her why she loiter'd there  
When the wind it was so chill;  
She turn'd her head and bade the child  
That scream'd behind be still.

She told us that her husband served  
A soldier, far away,  
And therefore to her parish she  
Was begging back her way.

We met a girl; her dress was loose  
And sunken was her eye,  
Who with the wanton's hollow voice  
Address'd the passers by;

I ask'd her what there was in guilt  
That could her heart allure  
To shame, disease, and late remorse?  
She answer'd, she was poor.

I turn'd me to the rich man then  
For silently stood he,  
You ask'd me why the Poor complain,  
And these have answer'd thee.

Robert Southey

# The Cross Roads

There was an old man breaking stones  
To mend the turnpike way,  
He sat him down beside a brook  
And out his bread and cheese he took,  
For now it was mid-day.

He lent his back against a post,  
His feet the brook ran by;  
And there were water-cresses growing,  
And pleasant was the water's flowing  
For he was hot and dry.

A soldier with his knapsack on  
Came travelling o'er the down,  
The sun was strong and he was tired,  
And of the old man he enquired  
How far to Bristol town.

Half an hour's walk for a young man  
By lanes and fields and stiles.  
But you the foot-path do not know,  
And if along the road you go  
Why then 'tis three good miles.

The soldier took his knapsack off  
For he was hot and dry;  
And out his bread and cheese he took  
And he sat down beside the brook  
To dine in company.

Old friend! in faith, the soldier says  
I envy you almost;  
My shoulders have been sorely prest  
And I should like to sit and rest,  
My back against that post.

In such a sweltering day as this  
A knapsack is the devil!  
And if on t'other side I sat

It would not only spoil our chat  
But make me seem uncivil.

The old man laugh'd and moved. I wish  
It were a great-arm'd chair!  
But this may help a man at need;  
And yet it was a cursed deed  
That ever brought it there.

There's a poor girl lies buried here  
Beneath this very place.  
The earth upon her corpse is prest  
This stake is driven into her breast  
And a stone is on her face.

The soldier had but just lent back  
And now he half rose up.  
There's sure no harm in dining here,  
My friend? and yet to be sincere  
I should not like to sup.

God rest her! she is still enough  
Who sleeps beneath our feet!  
The old man cried. No harm I trow  
She ever did herself, tho' now  
She lies where four roads meet.

I have past by about that hour  
When men are not most brave,  
It did not make my heart to fail,  
And I have heard the nightingale  
Sing sweetly on her grave.

I have past by about that hour  
When Ghosts their freedom have,  
But there was nothing here to fright,  
And I have seen the glow-worm's light  
Shine on the poor girl's grave.

There's one who like a Christian lies  
Beneath the church-tree's shade;  
I'd rather go a long mile round



Than pass at evening thro' the ground  
Wherein that man is laid.

There's one that in the church-yard lies  
For whom the bell did toll;  
He lies in consecrated ground,  
But for all the wealth in Bristol town  
I would not be with his soul!

Did'st see a house below the hill  
That the winds and the rains destroy?  
'Twas then a farm where he did dwell,  
And I remember it full well  
When I was a growing boy.

And she was a poor parish girl  
That came up from the west,  
From service hard she ran away  
And at that house in evil day  
Was taken in to rest.

The man he was a wicked man  
And an evil life he led;  
Rage made his cheek grow deadly white  
And his grey eyes were large and light,  
And in anger they grew red.

The man was bad, the mother worse,  
Bad fruit of a bad stem,  
'Twould make your hair to stand-on-end  
If I should tell to you my friend  
The things that were told of them!

Did'st see an out-house standing by?  
The walls alone remain;  
It was a stable then, but now  
Its mossy roof has fallen through  
All rotted by the rain.

The poor girl she had serv'd with them  
Some half-a-year, or more,  
When she was found hung up one day

Stiff as a corpse and cold as clay  
Behind that stable door!

It is a very lonesome place,  
No hut or house is near;  
Should one meet a murderer there alone  
'Twere vain to scream, and the dying groan  
Would never reach mortal ear.

And there were strange reports about  
That the coroner never guest.  
So he decreed that she should lie  
Where four roads meet in infamy,  
With a stake drove in her breast.

Upon a board they carried her  
To the place where four roads met,  
And I was one among the throng  
That hither followed them along,  
I shall never the sight forget!

They carried her upon a board  
In the cloaths in which she died;  
I saw the cap blow off her head,  
Her face was of a dark dark red  
Her eyes were starting wide:

I think they could not have been closed  
So widely did they strain.  
I never saw so dreadful a sight,  
And it often made me wake at night,  
For I saw her face again.

They laid her here where four roads meet.  
Beneath this very place,  
The earth upon her corpse was prest,  
This post is driven into her breast,  
And a stone is on her face.

Robert Southey

# The Curse Of Kehama

I charm thy life,  
From the weapons of strife,  
From stone and from wood,  
From fire and from flood,  
From the serpent's tooth,  
And the beast of blood.  
From sickness I charm thee,  
And time shall not harm thee;  
But earth, which is mine,  
Its fruits shall deny thee;  
And water shall hear me,  
And know thee and flee thee:  
And the winds shall not touch thee  
When they pass by thee,  
And the dews shall not wet thee  
When they fall nigh thee.  
And thou shalt seek death,  
To release thee, in vain;  
Thou shalt live in thy pain,  
While Kehama shall reign,  
With a fire in thy heart,  
And a fire in thy brain.  
And sleep shall obey me,  
And visit thee never,  
And the curse shall be on thee  
Forever and ever.

Robert Southey

# The Holly-Tree

O reader! hast thou ever stood to see  
The Holly-tree?  
The eye that contemplates it well perceives  
Its glossy leaves  
Ordered by an Intelligence so wise  
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen,  
Wrinkled and keen;

No grazing cattle, through their prickly round,  
Can reach to wound;  
But, as they grow where nothing is to fear,  
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,  
And moralize;  
And in this wisdom of the Holly-tree  
Can emblem see  
Wherewith, perchance, to make a pleasant rhyme, -  
One which may profit in the after-time.

Thus, though abroad, perchance, I might appear  
Harsh and austere;  
To those who on my leisure would intrude,  
Reserved and rude;  
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,  
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.

And should my youth - as youth is apt, I know, -  
Some harshness show,  
All vain asperities I, day by day,  
Would wear away,  
Till the smooth temper of my age should be  
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.

And as, when all the summer trees are seen  
So bright and green,  
The Holly-leaves their fadeless hues display

Less bright than they;  
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,  
What then so cheerful as the Holly-tree? -

So, serious should my youth appear among  
The thoughtless throng;  
So would I seem, amid the young and gay,  
More grave than they;  
That in my age as cheerful I might be  
As the green winter of the Holly-tree.

Robert Southey

# The Old Man's Comforts And How He Gained Them

You are old, Father William, the young man cried,  
The few locks which are left you are grey;  
You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man,  
Now tell me the reason I pray.

In the days of my youth, Father William replied,  
I remember'd that youth would fly fast,  
And abused not my health and my vigour at first  
That I never might need them at last.

You are old, Father William, the young man cried,  
And pleasures with youth pass away,  
And yet you lament not the days that are gone,  
Now tell me the reason I pray.

In the days of my youth, Father William replied,  
I remember'd that youth could not last;  
I thought of the future whatever I did,  
That I never might grieve for the past.

You are old, Father William, the young man cried,  
And life must be hastening away;  
You are chearful, and love to converse upon death!  
Now tell me the reason I pray.

I am chearful, young man, Father William replied,  
Let the cause thy attention engage;  
In the days of my youth I remember'd my God!  
And He hath not forgotten my age.

Robert Southey

# The Pauper's Funeral

What! and not one to heave the pious sigh!  
Not one whose sorrow-swoln and aching eye  
For social scenes, for life's endearments fled,  
Shall drop a tear and dwell upon the dead!  
Poor wretched Outcast! I will weep for thee,  
And sorrow for forlorn humanity.  
Yes I will weep, but not that thou art come  
To the stern Sabbath of the silent tomb:  
For squalid Want, and the black scorpion Care,  
Heart-withering fiends! shall never enter there.  
I sorrow for the ills thy life has known  
As thro' the world's long pilgrimage, alone,  
Haunted by Poverty and woe-begone,  
Unloved, unfriended, thou didst journey on:  
Thy youth in ignorance and labour past,  
And thine old age all barrenness and blast!  
Hard was thy Fate, which, while it doom'd to woe,  
Denied thee wisdom to support the blow;  
And robb'd of all its energy thy mind,  
Ere yet it cast thee on thy fellow-kind,  
Abject of thought, the victim of distress,  
To wander in the world's wide wilderness.

Poor Outcast sleep in peace! the wintry storm  
Blows bleak no more on thine unshelter'd form;  
Thy woes are past; thou restest in the tomb;--  
I pause--and ponder on the days to come.

Robert Southey

# The Race Of Banquo

Fly, son of Banquo! Fleance, fly!  
Leave thy guilty sire to die.  
O'er the heath the stripling fled,  
The wild storm howling round his head.  
Fear mightier thro' the shades of night  
Urged his feet, and wing'd his flight;  
And still he heard his father cry  
Fly, son of Banquo! Fleance, fly.

Fly, son of Banquo! Fleance, fly  
Leave thy guilty sire to die.  
On every blast was heard the moan  
The anguish'd shriek, the death-fraught groan;  
Loathly night-hags join the yell  
And see--the midnight rites of Hell.

Forms of magic! spare my life!  
Shield me from the murderer's knife!  
Before me dim in lurid light  
Float the phantoms of the night--  
Behind I hear my Father cry,  
Fly, son of Banquo--Fleance, fly!

Parent of the sceptred race,  
Fearless tread the circled space:  
Fearless Fleance venture near--  
Sire of monarchs--spurn at fear.

Sisters with prophetic breath  
Pour we now the dirge of Death!

Robert Southey



# The Rose

Nay EDITH! spare the rose!--it lives--it lives,  
It feels the noon-tide sun, and drinks refresh'd  
The dews of night; let not thy gentle hand  
Tear sunder its life-fibres and destroy  
The sense of being!--why that infidel smile?  
Come, I will bribe thee to be merciful,  
And thou shalt have a tale of other times,  
For I am skill'd in legendary lore,  
So thou wilt let it live. There was a time  
Ere this, the freshest sweetest flower that blooms,  
Bedeck'd the bowers of earth. Thou hast not heard  
How first by miracle its fragrant leaves  
Spread to the sun their blushing loveliness.

There dwelt at Bethlehem a Jewish maid  
And Zillah was her name, so passing fair  
That all Judea spake the damsel's praise.  
He who had seen her eyes' dark radiance  
How quick it spake the soul, and what a soul  
Beam'd in its mild effulgence, woe was he!  
For not in solitude, for not in crowds,  
Might he escape remembrance, or avoid  
Her imaged form that followed every where,  
And fill'd the heart, and fix'd the absent eye.  
Woe was he, for her bosom own'd no love  
Save the strong ardours of religious zeal,  
For Zillah on her God had centered all  
Her spirit's deep affections. So for her  
Her tribes-men sigh'd in vain, yet revered  
The obdurate virtue that destroyed their hopes.

One man there was, a vain and wretched man,  
Who saw, desired, despair'd, and hated her.  
His sensual eye had gloated on her cheek  
Even till the flush of angry modesty  
Gave it new charms, and made him gloat the more.  
She loath'd the man, for Hamuel's eye was bold,  
And the strong workings of brute selfishness  
Had moulded his broad features; and she fear'd

The bitterness of wounded vanity  
That with a fiendish hue would overcast  
His faint and lying smile. Nor vain her fear,  
For Hamuel vowed revenge and laid a plot  
Against her virgin fame. He spread abroad  
Whispers that travel fast, and ill reports  
That soon obtain belief; that Zillah's eye  
When in the temple heaven-ward it was rais'd  
Did swim with rapturous zeal, but there were those  
Who had beheld the enthusiast's melting glance  
With other feelings fill'd; that 'twas a task  
Of easy sort to play the saint by day  
Before the public eye, but that all eyes  
Were closed at night; that Zillah's life was foul,  
Yea forfeit to the law.

Shame--shame to man  
That he should trust so easily the tongue  
That stabs another's fame! the ill report  
Was heard, repeated, and believed,--and soon,  
For Hamuel by most damned artifice  
Produced such semblances of guilt, the Maid  
Was judged to shameful death.  
Without the walls  
There was a barren field; a place abhorr'd,  
For it was there where wretched criminals  
Were done to die; and there they built the stake,  
And piled the fuel round, that should consume  
The accused Maid, abandon'd, as it seem'd,  
By God and man. The assembled Bethlemites  
Beheld the scene, and when they saw the Maid  
Bound to the stake, with what calm holiness  
She lifted up her patient looks to Heaven,  
They doubted of her guilt. With other thoughts  
Stood Hamuel near the pile, him savage joy  
Led thitherward, but now within his heart  
Unwonted feelings stirr'd, and the first pangs  
Of wakening guilt, anticipating Hell.  
The eye of Zillah as it glanced around  
Fell on the murderer once, but not in wrath;  
And therefore like a dagger it had fallen,  
Had struck into his soul a cureless wound.

Conscience! thou God within us! not in the hour  
Of triumph, dost thou spare the guilty wretch,  
Not in the hour of infamy and death  
Forsake the virtuous! they draw near the stake--  
And lo! the torch! hold hold your erring hands!  
Yet quench the rising flames!--they rise! they spread!  
They reach the suffering Maid! oh God protect  
The innocent one!  
They rose, they spread, they raged--  
The breath of God went forth; the ascending fire  
Beneath its influence bent, and all its flames  
In one long lightning flash collecting fierce,  
Darted and blasted Hamuel--him alone.  
Hark--what a fearful scream the multitude  
Pour forth!--and yet more miracles! the stake  
Buds out, and spreads its light green leaves and bowers  
The innocent Maid, and roses bloom around,  
Now first beheld since Paradise was lost,  
And fill with Eden odours all the air.

Robert Southey

# The Sailor, Who Had Served In The Slave Trade.

He stopt,--it surely was a groan  
That from the hovel came!  
He stopt and listened anxiously  
Again it sounds the same.

It surely from the hovel comes!  
And now he hastens there,  
And thence he hears the name of Christ  
Amidst a broken prayer.

He entered in the hovel now,  
A sailor there he sees,  
His hands were lifted up to Heaven  
And he was on his knees.

Nor did the Sailor so intent  
His entering footsteps heed,  
But now the Lord's prayer said, and now  
His half-forgotten creed.

And often on his Saviour call'd  
With many a bitter groan,  
In such heart-anguish as could spring  
From deepest guilt alone.

He ask'd the miserable man  
Why he was kneeling there,  
And what the crime had been that caus'd  
The anguish of his prayer.

Oh I have done a wicked thing!  
It haunts me night and day,  
And I have sought this lonely place  
Here undisturb'd to pray.

I have no place to pray on board  
So I came here alone,  
That I might freely kneel and pray,  
And call on Christ and groan.

If to the main-mast head I go,  
The wicked one is there,  
From place to place, from rope to rope,  
He follows every where.

I shut my eyes,--it matters not--  
Still still the same I see,--  
And when I lie me down at night  
'Tis always day with me.

He follows follows every where,  
And every place is Hell!  
O God--and I must go with him  
In endless fire to dwell.

He follows follows every where,  
He's still above--below,  
Oh tell me where to fly from him!  
Oh tell me where to go!

But tell me, quoth the Stranger then,  
What this thy crime hath been,  
So haply I may comfort give  
To one that grieves for sin.

O I have done a cursed deed  
The wretched man replies,  
And night and day and every where  
'Tis still before my eyes.

I sail'd on board a Guinea-man  
And to the slave-coast went;  
Would that the sea had swallowed me  
When I was innocent!

And we took in our cargo there,  
Three hundred negroe slaves,  
And we sail'd homeward merrily  
Over the ocean waves.

But some were sulky of the slaves

And would not touch their meat,  
So therefore we were forced by threats  
And blows to make them eat.

One woman sulkier than the rest  
Would still refuse her food,--  
O Jesus God! I hear her cries--  
I see her in her blood!

The Captain made me tie her up  
And flog while he stood by,  
And then he curs'd me if I staid  
My hand to hear her cry.

She groan'd, she shriek'd--I could not spare  
For the Captain he stood by--  
Dear God! that I might rest one night  
From that poor woman's cry!

She twisted from the blows--her blood  
Her mangled flesh I see--  
And still the Captain would not spare--  
Oh he was worse than me!

She could not be more glad than I  
When she was taken down,  
A blessed minute--'twas the last  
That I have ever known!

I did not close my eyes all night,  
Thinking what I had done;  
I heard her groans and they grew faint  
About the rising sun.

She groan'd and groan'd, but her groans grew  
Fainter at morning tide,  
Fainter and fainter still they came  
Till at the noon she died.

They flung her overboard;--poor wretch  
She rested from her pain,--  
But when--O Christ! O blessed God!

Shall I have rest again!

I saw the sea close over her,  
Yet she was still in sight;  
I see her twisting every where;  
I see her day and night.

Go where I will, do what I can  
The wicked one I see--  
Dear Christ have mercy on my soul,  
O God deliver me!

To morrow I set sail again  
Not to the Negroe shore--  
Wretch that I am I will at least  
Commit that sin no more.

O give me comfort if you can--  
Oh tell me where to fly--  
And bid me hope, if there be hope,  
For one so lost as I.

Poor wretch, the stranger he replied,  
Put thou thy trust in heaven,  
And call on him for whose dear sake  
All sins shall be forgiven.

This night at least is thine, go thou  
And seek the house of prayer,  
There shalt thou hear the word of God  
And he will help thee there!

Robert Southey

# The Soldier's Wife

Weary way-wanderer languid and sick at heart  
Travelling painfully over the rugged road,  
Wild-visag'd Wanderer! ah for thy heavy chance!

Sorely thy little one drags by thee bare-footed,  
Cold is the baby that hangs at thy bending back  
Meagre and livid and screaming its wretchedness.

Woe-begone mother, half anger, half agony,  
As over thy shoulder thou lookest to hush the babe,  
Bleakly the blinding snow beats in thy hagged face.

Thy husband will never return from the war again,  
Cold is thy hopeless heart even as Charity--  
Cold are thy famish'd babes--God help thee, widow'd One!

Robert Southey



# The Surgeon's Warning

The Doctor whispered to the Nurse  
And the Surgeon knew what he said,  
And he grew pale at the Doctor's tale  
And trembled in his sick bed.

Now fetch me my brethren and fetch them with speed  
The Surgeon affrighted said,  
The Parson and the Undertaker,  
Let them hasten or I shall be dead.

The Parson and the Undertaker  
They hastily came complying,  
And the Surgeon's Prentices ran up stairs  
When they heard that their master was dying.

The Prentices all they entered the room  
By one, by two, by three,  
With a sly grin came Joseph in,  
First of the company.

The Surgeon swore as they enter'd his door,  
'Twas fearful his oaths to hear,--  
Now send these scoundrels to the Devil,  
For God's sake my brethren dear.

He foam'd at the mouth with the rage he felt  
And he wrinkled his black eye-brow,  
That rascal Joe would be at me I know,  
But zounds let him spare me now.

Then out they sent the Prentices,  
The fit it left him weak,  
He look'd at his brothers with ghastly eyes,  
And faintly struggled to speak.

All kinds of carcasses I have cut up,  
And the judgment now must be--  
But brothers I took care of you,  
So pray take care of me!

I have made candles of infants fat  
The Sextons have been my slaves,  
I have bottled babes unborn, and dried  
Hearts and livers from rifled graves.

And my Prentices now will surely come  
And carve me bone from bone,  
And I who have rifled the dead man's grave  
Shall never have rest in my own.

Bury me in lead when I am dead,  
My brethren I intreat,  
And see the coffin weigh'd I beg  
Lest the Plumber should be a cheat.

And let it be solder'd closely down  
Strong as strong can be I implore,  
And put it in a patent coffin,  
That I may rise no more.

If they carry me off in the patent coffin  
Their labour will be in vain,  
Let the Undertaker see it bought of the maker  
Who lives by St. Martin's lane.

And bury me in my brother's church  
For that will safer be,  
And I implore lock the church door  
And pray take care of the key.

And all night long let three stout men  
The vestry watch within,  
To each man give a gallon of beer  
And a keg of Holland's gin;

Powder and ball and blunder-buss  
To save me if he can,  
And eke five guineas if he shoot  
A resurrection man.

And let them watch me for three weeks

My wretched corpse to save,  
For then I think that I may stink  
Enough to rest in my grave.

The Surgeon laid him down in his bed,  
His eyes grew deadly dim,  
Short came his breath and the struggle of death  
Distorted every limb.

They put him in lead when he was dead  
And shrouded up so neat,  
And they the leaden coffin weigh  
Lest the Plumber should be a cheat.

They had it solder'd closely down  
And examined it o'er and o'er,  
And they put it in a patent coffin  
That he might rise no more.

For to carry him off in a patent coffin  
Would they thought be but labour in vain,  
So the Undertaker saw it bought of the maker  
Who lives by St. Martin's lane.

In his brother's church they buried him  
That safer he might be,  
They lock'd the door and would not trust  
The Sexton with the key.

And three men in the vestry watch  
To save him if they can,  
And should he come there to shoot they swear  
A resurrection man.

And the first night by lanthorn light  
Thro' the church-yard as they went,  
A guinea of gold the sexton shewed  
That Mister Joseph sent.

But conscience was tough, it was not enough  
And their honesty never swerved,  
And they bade him go with Mister Joe

To the Devil as he deserved.

So all night long by the vestry fire  
They quaff'd their gin and ale,  
And they did drink as you may think  
And told full many a tale.

The second night by lanthorn light  
Thro' the church-yard as they went,  
He whisper'd anew and shew'd them two  
That Mister Joseph sent.

The guineas were bright and attracted their sight  
They look'd so heavy and new,  
And their fingers itch'd as they were bewitch'd  
And they knew not what to do.

But they waver'd not long for conscience was strong  
And they thought they might get more,  
And they refused the gold, but not  
So rudely as before.

So all night long by the vestry fire  
They quaff'd their gin and ale,  
And they did drink as you may think  
And told full many a tale.

The third night as by lanthorn light  
Thro' the church-yard they went,  
He bade them see and shew'd them three  
That Mister Joseph sent.

They look'd askance with eager glance,  
The guineas they shone bright,  
For the Sexton on the yellow gold  
Let fall his lanthorn light.

And he look'd sly with his roguish eye  
And gave a well-tim'd wink,  
And they could not stand the sound in his hand  
For he made the guineas chink.

And conscience late that had such weight,  
All in a moment fails,  
For well they knew that it was true  
A dead man told no tales,

And they gave all their powder and ball  
And took the gold so bright,  
And they drank their beer and made good cheer,  
Till now it was midnight.

Then, tho' the key of the church door  
Was left with the Parson his brother,  
It opened at the Sexton's touch--  
Because he had another.

And in they go with that villain Joe  
To fetch the body by night,  
And all the church look'd dismally  
By his dark lanthorn light.

They laid the pick-axe to the stones  
And they moved them soon asunder.  
They shovell'd away the hard-prest clay  
And came to the coffin under.

They burst the patent coffin first  
And they cut thro' the lead,  
And they laugh'd aloud when they saw the shroud  
Because they had got at the dead.

And they allowed the Sexton the shroud  
And they put the coffin back,  
And nose and knees they then did squeeze  
The Surgeon in a sack.

The watchmen as they past along  
Full four yards off could smell,  
And a curse bestowed upon the load  
So disagreeable.

So they carried the sack a-pick-a-back  
And they carv'd him bone from bone,

But what became of the Surgeon's soul  
Was never to mortal known.

Robert Southey

# The Triumph Of Woman

Glad as the weary traveller tempest-tost  
To reach secure at length his native coast,  
Who wandering long o'er distant lands has sped,  
The night-blast wildly howling round his head,  
Known all the woes of want, and felt the storm  
Of the bleak winter parch his shivering form;  
The journey o'er and every peril past  
Beholds his little cottage-home at last,  
And as he sees afar the smoke curl slow,  
Feels his full eyes with transport overflow:  
So from the scene where Death and Anguish reign,  
And Vice and Folly drench with blood the plain,  
Joyful I turn, to sing how Woman's praise  
Avail'd again Jerusalem to raise,  
Call'd forth the sanction of the Despot's nod,  
And freed the nation best-belov'd of God.

Darius gives the feast: to Persia's court,  
Awed by his will, the obedient throng resort,  
Attending Satraps swell the Prince's pride,  
And vanquish'd Monarchs grace their Conqueror's side.  
No more the Warrior wears the garb of war,  
Sharps the strong steel, or mounts the scythed car;  
No more Judaea's sons dejected go,  
And hang the head and heave the sigh of woe.  
From Persia's rugged hills descend the train.  
From where Orontes foams along the plain,  
From where Choaspes rolls his royal waves,  
And India sends her sons, submissive slaves.  
Thy daughters Babylon to grace the feast  
Weave the loose robe, and paint the flowery vest,  
With roseate wreaths they braid the glossy hair.  
They tinge the cheek which Nature form'd so fair,  
Learn the soft step, the soul-subduing glance,  
Melt in the song, and swim adown the dance.  
Exalted on the Monarch's golden throne  
In royal state the fair Apame shone;

Her form of majesty, her eyes of fire

Chill with respect, or kindle with desire.  
The admiring multitude her charms adore,  
And own her worthy of the crown she wore.

Now on his couch reclin'd Darius lay,  
Tir'd with the toilsome pleasures of the day;  
Without Judaea's watchful sons await  
To guard the sleeping pageant of the state.  
Three youths were these of Judah's royal race,  
Three youths whom Nature dower'd with every grace,  
To each the form of symmetry she gave,  
And haughty Genius curs'd each favorite slave;  
These fill'd the cup, around the Monarch kept,  
Serv'd as he spake, and guarded whilst he slept.

Yet oft for Salem's hallowed towers laid low  
The sigh would heave, the unbidden tear would flow;  
And when the dull and wearying round of Power  
Allowed Zorobabel one vacant hour,  
He lov'd on Babylon's high wall to roam,  
And stretch the gaze towards his distant home,  
Or on Euphrates' willowy banks reclin'd  
Hear the sad harp moan fitful to the wind.

As now the perfum'd lamps stream wide their light,  
And social converse cheers the livelong night,  
Thus spake Zorobabel, "too long in vain  
"For Sion desolate her sons complain;  
"In anguish worn the joyless years lag slow,  
"And these proud conquerors mock their captive's woe.  
"Whilst Cyrus triumph'd here in victor state  
"A brighter prospect cheer'd our exil'd fate,  
"Our sacred walls again he bade us raise,  
"And to Jehovah rear the pile of praise.  
"Quickly these fond hopes faded from our eyes,  
"As the frail sun that gilds the wintry skies,  
"And spreads a moment's radiance o'er the plain,  
"Soon hid by clouds that dim the scene again.

"Opprest by Artaxerxes' jealous reign  
"We vainly pleaded here, and wept in vain.  
"Now when Darius, chief of mild command,



"Bids joy and pleasure fill the festive land,  
"Still shall we droop the head in sullen grief,  
"And sternly silent shun to seek relief?  
"What if amid the Monarch's mirthful throng  
"Our harps should echo to the chearful song?

"Fair is the occasion," thus the one replied,  
"And now let all our tuneful skill be tried.  
"Whilst the gay courtiers quaff the smiling bowl,  
"And wine's strong fumes inspire the madden'd soul,  
"Where all around is merriment, be mine  
"To strike the lute, and praise the power of Wine.

"And whilst" his friend replied in state alone  
"Lord of the earth Darius fills the throne,  
"Be yours the mighty power of Wine to sing,  
"My lute shall sound the praise of Persia's King."

To them Zorobabel, on themes like these  
"Seek ye the Monarch of Mankind to please;  
"To Wine superior or to Power's strong arms,  
"Be mine to sing resistless Woman's charms.  
"To him victorious in the rival lays  
"Shall just Darius give the meed of praise;  
"The purple robe his honor'd frame shall fold,  
"The beverage sparkle in his cup of gold;  
"A golden couch support his bed of rest,  
"The chain of honor grace his favor'd breast;  
"His the soft turban, his the car's array  
"O'er Babylon's high wall to wheel its way;  
"And for his wisdom seated on the throne,  
"For the KING'S COUSIN shall the Bard be known."

Intent they meditate the future lay,  
And watch impatient for the dawn of day.  
The morn rose clear, and shrill were heard the flute,  
The cornet, sackbut, dulcimer, and lute;  
To Babylon's gay streets the throng resort,  
Swarm thro' the gates, and fill the festive court.  
High on his throne Darius tower'd in pride,  
The fair Apame grac'd the Sovereign's side;  
And now she smil'd, and now with mimic frown

Placed on her brow the Monarch's sacred crown.  
In transport o'er her faultless form he bends,  
Loves every look, and every act commends.

And now Darius bids the herald call  
Judaea's Bard to grace the thronging hall.  
Hush'd is each sound--the attending crowd are mute,  
The Hebrew lightly strikes the chearful lute:

When the Traveller on his way,  
Who has toil'd the livelong day,  
Feels around on every side  
The chilly mists of eventide,  
Fatigued and faint his wearied mind  
Rekurs to all he leaves behind;  
He thinks upon the well-trimm'd hearth,  
The evening hour of social mirth,  
And her who at departing day  
Weeps for her husband far away.  
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,  
Bid it renovate his soul;  
Then shall sorrow sink to sleep,  
And he who wept, no more shall weep;  
For his care-clouded brow shall clear,  
And his glad eye shall sparkle thro' the tear.

When the poor man heart-opprest  
Betakes him to his evening rest,  
And worn with labour thinks in sorrow  
Of the labor of to-morrow;  
When sadly musing on his lot  
He hies him to his joyless cot,  
And loathes to meet his children there,  
The rivals for his scanty fare:  
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,  
Bid it renovate his soul;  
The generous juice with magic power  
Shall cheat with happiness the hour,  
And with each warm affection fill  
The heart by want and wretchedness made chill.

When, at the dim close of day,

The Captive loves alone to stray  
Along the haunts recluse and rude  
Of sorrow and of solitude;  
When he sits with moveless eye  
To mark the lingering radiance die,  
And lets distemper'd Fancy roam  
Amid the ruins of his home,--  
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,  
Bid it renovate his soul;  
The bowl shall better thoughts bestow,  
And lull to rest his wakeful woe,  
And Joy shall bless the evening hour,  
And make the Captive Fortune's conqueror.

When the wearying cares of state  
Oppress the Monarch with their weight,  
When from his pomp retir'd alone  
He feels the duties of the throne,  
Feels that the multitude below  
Depend on him for weal or woe;  
When his powerful will may bless  
A realm with peace and happiness,  
Or with desolating breath  
Breathe ruin round, and woe, and death:  
Oh give to him the flowing bowl,  
Bid it humanize his soul;  
He shall not feel the empire's weight,  
He shall not feel the cares of state,  
The bowl shall each dark thought beguile,  
And Nations live and prosper from his smile.

Husht was the lute, the Hebrew ceas'd the song;  
Long peals of plaudits echoed from the throng;  
Each tongue the liberal words of praise repaid,  
On every cheek a smile applauding play'd;  
The rival Bard advanced, he struck the string,  
And pour'd the loftier song to Persia's King.

Why should the wearying cares of state  
Oppress the Monarch with their weight?  
Alike to him if Peace shall bless  
The multitude with happiness;

Alike to him if frenzied War  
Careers triumphant on the embattled plain,  
And rolling on o'er myriads slain,  
With gore and wounds shall clog his scythed car.  
What tho' the tempest rage! no sound  
Of the deep thunder shakes his distant throne,  
And the red flash that spreads destruction round,  
Reflects a glorious splendour on the Crown.

Where is the Man who with ennobling pride  
Beholds not his own nature? where is he  
Who but with deep amazement awe allied  
Must muse the mysteries of the human mind,  
The miniature of Deity.  
For Man the vernal clouds descending  
Shower down their fertilizing rain,  
For Man the ripen'd harvest bending  
Waves with soft murmur o'er the plenteous plain.  
He spreads the sail on high,  
The rude gale wafts him o'er the main;  
For him the winds of Heaven subservient blow,  
Earth teems for him, for him the waters flow,  
He thinks, and wills, and acts, a Deity below!

Where is the King who with elating pride  
Sees not this Man--this godlike Man his Slave?  
Mean are the mighty by the Monarch's side,  
Alike the wife, alike the brave  
With timid step and pale, advance,  
And tremble at the royal glance;  
Suspended millions watch his breath  
Whose smile is happiness, whose frown is death.

Why goes the Peasant from that little cot,  
Where PEACE and LOVE have blest his humble life?  
In vain his agonizing wife  
With tears bedews her husband's face,  
And clasps him in a long and last embrace;  
In vain his children round his bosom creep,  
And weep to see their mother weep,  
Fettering their father with their little arms;  
What are to him the wars alarms?

What are to him the distant foes?  
He at the earliest dawn of day  
To daily labor went his way;  
And when he saw the sun decline,  
He sat in peace beneath his vine:--  
The king commands, the peasant goes,  
From all he lov'd on earth he flies,  
And for his monarch toils, and fights, and bleeds, and dies.

What tho' yon City's castled wall  
Casts o'er the darken'd plain its crested shade?  
What tho' their Priests in earnest terror call  
On all their host of Gods to aid?  
Vain is the bulwark, vain the tower;  
In vain her gallant youths expose  
Their breasts, a bulwark, to the foes.  
In vain at that tremendous hour,  
Clasp'd in the savage soldier's reeking arms,  
Shrieks to tame Heaven the violated Maid.  
By the rude hand of Ruin scatter'd round  
Their moss-grown towers shall spread the desert ground.  
Low shall the mouldering palace lie,  
Amid the princely halls the grass wave high,  
And thro' the shatter'd roof descend the inclement sky.

Gay o'er the embattled plain  
Moves yonder warrior train,  
Their banners wanton on the morning gale!  
Full on their bucklers beams the rising ray,  
Their glittering helmets flash a brighter day,  
The shout of war rings echoing o'er the vale:  
Far reaches as the aching eye can strain  
The splendid horror of their wide array.  
Ah! not in vain expectant, o'er  
Their glorious pomp the Vultures soar!  
Amid the Conqueror's palace high  
Shall sound the song of victory:  
Long after journeying o'er the plain  
The Traveller shall with startled eye  
See their white bones then blanched by many a winter sky.

Lord of the Earth! we will not raise

The Temple to thy bounded praise.  
For thee no victim need expire,  
For thee no altar blaze with hallowed fire!  
The burning city flames for thee--  
Thine altar is the field of victory!  
Thy sacred Majesty to bless  
Man a self-offer'd victim freely flies;  
To thee he sacrifices Happiness,  
And Peace, and Love's endearing ties,  
To thee a Slave he lives, to thee a Slave he dies.

Husht was the lute, the Hebrew ceas'd to sing;  
The shout rush'd forth--for ever live the King!  
Loud was the uproar, as when Rome's decree  
Pronounc'd Achaia once again was free;  
Assembled Greece enrapt with fond belief  
Heard the false boon, and bless'd the villain Chief;  
Each breast with Freedom's holy ardor glows,  
From every voice the cry of rapture rose;  
Their thundering clamors burst the astonish'd sky,  
And birds o'erpassing hear, and drop, and die.  
Thus o'er the Persian dome their plaudits ring,  
And the high hall re-echoed--live the King!  
The Mutes bow'd reverent down before their Lord,  
The assembled Satraps envied and ador'd,  
Joy sparkled in the Monarch's conscious eyes,  
And his pleas'd pride already doom'd the prize.

Silent they saw Zorobabel advance:  
Quick on Apame shot his timid glance,  
With downward eye he paus'd a moment mute,  
And with light finger touch'd the softer lute.  
Apame knew the Hebrew's grateful cause,  
And bent her head and sweetly smil'd applause.

Why is the Warrior's cheek so red?  
Why downward droops his musing head?  
Why that slow step, that faint advance,  
That keen yet quick-retreating glance?  
That crested head in war tower'd high,  
No backward glance disgrac'd that eye,

No flushing fear that cheek o'erspread  
When stern he strode o'er heaps of dead;  
Strange tumult now his bosom moves--  
The Warrior fears because he loves.

Why does the Youth delight to rove  
Amid the dark and lonely grove?  
Why in the throng where all are gay,  
His wandering eye with meaning fraught,  
Sits he alone in silent thought?  
Silent he sits; for far away  
His passion'd soul delights to stray;  
Recluse he roves and strives to shun  
All human-kind because he loves but One!

Yes, King of Persia, thou art blest;  
But not because the sparkling bowl  
To rapture lifts thy waken'd soul  
But not because of Power possest,  
Not that the Nations dread thy nod,  
And Princes reverence thee their earthly God,  
Even on a Monarch's solitude  
Care the black Spectre will intrude,  
The bowl brief pleasure can bestow,  
The Purple cannot shield from Woe.  
But King of Persia thou art blest,  
For Heaven who rais'd thee thus the world above  
Has made thee happy in Apame's love!

Oh! I have seen his fond looks trace  
Each angel feature of her face,  
Rove o'er her form with eager eye,  
And sigh and gaze, and gaze and sigh.  
Lo! from his brow with mimic frown,  
Apame takes the sacred crown;  
Her faultless form, her lovely face  
Add to the diadem new grace  
And subject to a Woman's laws  
Darius sees and smiles applause!

He ceas'd, and silent still remain'd the throng  
Whilst rapt attention own'd the power of song.

Then loud as when the wintry whirlwinds blow  
From ev'ry voice the thundering plaudits flow;  
Darius smil'd, Apame's sparkling eyes  
Glanc'd on the King, and Woman won the prize.

Now silent sat the expectant crowd, alone  
The victor Hebrew gaz'd not on the throne;  
With deeper hue his cheek distemper'd glows,  
With statelier stature, loftier now he rose;  
Heavenward he gaz'd, regardless of the throng,  
And pour'd with awful voice sublimer song.

Ancient of Days! Eternal Truth! one hymn  
One holier strain the Bard shall raise to thee,  
Thee Powerful! Thee Benevolent! Thee Just!  
Friend! Father! All in All! the Vines rich blood,  
The Monarch's might, and Woman's conquering charms,--  
These shall we praise alone? Oh ye who sit  
Beneath your vine, and quaff at evening hour  
The healthful bowl, remember him whose dews,  
Whose rains, whose sun, matur'd the growing fruit,  
Creator and Preserver! Reverence Him,  
O thou who from thy throne dispensest life  
And death, for He has delegated power.  
And thou shalt one day at the throne of God  
Render most strict account! O ye who gaze  
Enrapt on Beauty's fascinating form,  
Gaze on with love, and loving Beauty, learn  
To shun abhorrent all the mental eye  
Beholds deform'd and foul; for so shall Love  
Climb to the Source of Virtue. God of Truth!  
All-Just! All-Mighty! I should ill deserve  
Thy noblest gift, the gift divine of song,  
If, so content with ear-deep melodies  
To please all profitless, I did not pour  
Severer strains; of Truth--eternal Truth,  
Unchanging Justice, universal Love.  
Such strains awake the soul to loftiest thoughts,  
Such strains the Blessed Spirits of the Good  
Waft, grateful incense, to the Halls of Heaven.

The dying notes still murmur'd on the string,



When from his throne arose the raptur'd King,  
About to speak he stood, and wav'd his hand,  
And all expectant sat the obedient band.

Then just and gen'rous, thus the Monarch cries,  
"Be thine Zorobabel the well earned prize.  
"The purple robe of state thy form shall fold,  
"The beverage sparkle in thy cup of gold;  
"The golden couch, the car, and honor'd chain,  
"Requite the merits of thy favor'd strain,  
"And rais'd supreme the ennobled race among  
"Be call'd MY COUSIN for the victor song.  
"Nor these alone the victor song shall bless,  
"Ask what thou wilt, and what thou wilt, possess."  
"Fall'n is Jerusalem!" the Hebrew cries.  
And patriot anguish fills his streaming eyes,  
"Hurl'd to the earth by Rapine's vengeful rod,  
"Polluted lies the temple of our God,  
"Far in a foreign land her sons remain,  
"Hear the keen taunt, and drag the captive chain:  
"In fruitless woe they wear the wearying years,  
"And steep the bread of bitterness in tears.  
"O Monarch, greatest, mildest, best of men,  
"Restore us to those ruin'd walls again!  
"Allow our race to rear that sacred dome,  
"To live in liberty, and die at Home."

So spake Zorobabel--thus Woman's praise  
Avail'd again Jerusalem to raise,  
Call'd forth the sanction of the Despot's nod,  
And freed the Nation best belov'd of God.

Robert Southey

# The Victory

Hark--how the church-bells thundering harmony  
Stuns the glad ear! tidings of joy have come,  
Good tidings of great joy! two gallant ships  
Met on the element,--they met, they fought  
A desperate fight!--good tidings of great joy!  
Old England triumphed! yet another day  
Of glory for the ruler of the waves!  
For those who fell, 'twas in their country's cause,  
They have their passing paragraphs of praise  
And are forgotten.

There was one who died  
In that day's glory, whose obscurer name  
No proud historian's page will chronicle.  
Peace to his honest soul! I read his name,  
'Twas in the list of slaughter, and blest God  
The sound was not familiar to mine ear.  
But it was told me after that this man  
Was one whom lawful violence had forced  
From his own home and wife and little ones,  
Who by his labour lived; that he was one  
Whose uncorrupted heart could keenly feel  
A husband's love, a father's anxiousness,  
That from the wages of his toil he fed  
The distant dear ones, and would talk of them  
At midnight when he trod the silent deck  
With him he valued, talk of them, of joys  
That he had known--oh God! and of the hour  
When they should meet again, till his full heart  
His manly heart at last would overflow  
Even like a child's with very tenderness.  
Peace to his honest spirit! suddenly  
It came, and merciful the ball of death,  
For it came suddenly and shattered him,  
And left no moment's agonizing thought  
On those he loved so well.

He ocean deep  
Now lies at rest. Be Thou her comforter  
Who art the widow's friend! Man does not know  
What a cold sickness made her blood run back

When first she heard the tidings of the fight;  
Man does not know with what a dreadful hope  
She listened to the names of those who died,  
Man does not know, or knowing will not heed,  
With what an agony of tenderness  
She gazed upon her children, and beheld  
His image who was gone. Oh God! be thou  
Her comforter who art the widow's friend!

Robert Southey

# The Vision Of The Maid Of Orleans - The First Book

Orleans was hush'd in sleep. Stretch'd on her couch  
The delegated Maiden lay: with toil  
Exhausted and sore anguish, soon she closed  
Her heavy eye-lids; not reposing then,  
For busy Phantasy, in other scenes  
Awakened. Whether that superior powers,  
By wise permission, prompt the midnight dream,  
Instructing so the passive faculty;  
Or that the soul, escaped its fleshly clog,  
Flies free, and soars amid the invisible world,  
And all things 'are' that 'seem'.

Along a moor,  
Barren, and wide, and drear, and desolate,  
She roam'd a wanderer thro' the cheerless night.  
Far thro' the silence of the unbroken plain  
The bittern's boom was heard, hoarse, heavy, deep,  
It made most fitting music to the scene.  
Black clouds, driven fast before the stormy wind,  
Swept shadowing; thro' their broken folds the moon  
Struggled sometimes with transitory ray,  
And made the moving darkness visible.  
And now arrived beside a fenny lake  
She stands: amid its stagnate waters, hoarse  
The long sedge rustled to the gales of night.  
An age-worn bark receives the Maid, impell'd  
By powers unseen; then did the moon display  
Where thro' the crazy vessel's yawning side  
The muddy wave oozed in: a female guides,  
And spreads the sail before the wind, that moan'd  
As melancholy mournful to her ear,  
As ever by the dungeon'd wretch was heard  
Howling at evening round the embattled towers  
Of that hell-house of France, ere yet sublime  
The almighty people from their tyrant's hand  
Dash'd down the iron rod.  
Intent the Maid  
Gazed on the pilot's form, and as she gazed  
Shiver'd, for wan her face was, and her eyes

Hollow, and her sunk cheeks were furrowed deep,  
Channell'd by tears; a few grey locks hung down  
Beneath her hood: then thro' the Maiden's veins  
Chill crept the blood, for, as the night-breeze pass'd,  
Lifting her tattcr'd mantle, coil'd around  
She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart.

The plumeless bat with short shrill note flits by,  
And the night-raven's scream came fitfully,  
Borne on the hollow blast. Eager the Maid  
Look'd to the shore, and now upon the bank  
Leaps, joyful to escape, yet trembling still  
In recollection.

There, a mouldering pile  
Stretch'd its wide ruins, o'er the plain below  
Casting a gloomy shade, save where the moon  
Shone thro' its fretted windows: the dark Yew,  
Withering with age, branched there its naked roots,  
And there the melancholy Cypress rear'd  
Its head; the earth was heav'd with many a mound,  
And here and there a half-demolish'd tomb.

And now, amid the ruin's darkest shade,  
The Virgin's eye beheld where pale blue flames  
Rose wavering, now just gleaming from the earth,  
And now in darkness drown'd. An aged man  
Sat near, seated on what in long-past days  
Had been some sculptur'd monument, now fallen  
And half-obscur'd by moss, and gathered heaps  
Of withered yew-leaves and earth-mouldering bones;  
And shining in the ray was seen the track  
Of slimy snail obscene. Composed his look,  
His eye was large and rayless, and fix'd full  
Upon the Maid; the blue flames on his face  
Stream'd a pale light; his face was of the hue  
Of death; his limbs were mantled in a shroud.

Then with a deep heart-terrifying voice,  
Exclaim'd the Spectre, 'Welcome to these realms,  
These regions of DESPAIR! O thou whose steps  
By GRIEF conducted to these sad abodes

Have pierced; welcome, welcome to this gloom  
Eternal, to this everlasting night,  
Where never morning darts the enlivening ray,  
Where never shines the sun, but all is dark,  
Dark as the bosom of their gloomy King.'

So saying he arose, and by the hand  
The Virgin seized with such a death-cold touch  
As froze her very heart; and drawing on,  
Her, to the abbey's inner ruin, led  
Resistless. Thro' the broken roof the moon  
Glimmer'd a scatter'd ray; the ivy twined  
Round the dismantled column; imaged forms  
Of Saints and warlike Chiefs, moss-canker'd now  
And mutilate, lay strewn upon the ground,  
With crumbled fragments, crucifixes fallen,  
And rusted trophies; and amid the heap  
Some monument's defaced legend spake  
All human glory vain.

The loud blast roar'd  
Amid the pile; and from the tower the owl  
Scream'd as the tempest shook her secret nest.  
He, silent, led her on, and often paus'd,  
And pointed, that her eye might contemplate  
At leisure the drear scene.  
He dragged her on  
Thro' a low iron door, down broken stairs;  
Then a cold horror thro' the Maiden's frame  
Crept, for she stood amid a vault, and saw,  
By the sepulchral lamp's dim glaring light,  
The fragments of the dead.  
'Look here!' he cried,  
'Damsel, look here! survey this house of Death;  
O soon to tenant it! soon to increase  
These trophies of mortality! for hence  
Is no return. Gaze here! behold this skull,  
These eyeless sockets, and these unflesh'd jaws,  
That with their ghastly grinning, seem to mock  
Thy perishable charms; for thus thy cheek  
Must moulder. Child of Grief! shrinks not thy soul,  
Viewing these horrors? trembles not thy heart

At the dread thought, that here its life's-blood soon  
Now warm in life and feeling, mingle soon  
With the cold clod? a thought most horrible!  
So only dreadful, for reality  
Is none of suffering here; here all is peace;  
No nerve will throb to anguish in the grave.  
Dreadful it is to think of losing life;  
But having lost, knowledge of loss is not,  
Therefore no ill. Haste, Maiden, to repose;  
Probe deep the seat of life.'

So spake DESPAIR

The vaulted roof echoed his hollow voice,  
And all again was silence. Quick her heart  
Panted. He drew a dagger from his breast,  
And cried again, 'Haste Damsel to repose!  
One blow, and rest for ever!' On the Fiend  
Dark scowl'd the Virgin with indignant eye,  
And dash'd the dagger down. He next his heart  
Replaced the murderous steel, and drew the Maid  
Along the downward vault.

The damp earth gave

A dim sound as they pass'd: the tainted air  
Was cold, and heavy with unwholesome dews.  
'Behold!' the fiend exclaim'd, 'how gradual here  
The fleshly burden of mortality  
Moulders to clay!' then fixing his broad eye  
Full on her face, he pointed where a corpse  
Lay livid; she beheld with loathing look,  
The spectacle abhorr'd by living man.

'Look here!' DESPAIR pursued, 'this loathsome mass  
Was once as lovely, and as full of life  
As, Damsel! thou art now. Those deep-sunk eyes  
Once beam'd the mild light of intelligence,  
And where thou seest the pamper'd flesh-worm trail,  
Once the white bosom heaved. She fondly thought  
That at the hallowed altar, soon the Priest  
Should bless her coming union, and the torch  
Its joyful lustre o'er the hall of joy,  
Cast on her nuptial evening: earth to earth  
That Priest consign'd her, and the funeral lamp  
Glares on her cold face; for her lover went

By glory lur'd to war, and perish'd there;  
Nor she endur'd to live. Ha! fades thy cheek?  
Dost thou then, Maiden, tremble at the tale?  
Look here! behold the youthful paramour!  
The self-devoted hero!

Fearfully

The Maid look'd down, and saw the well known face  
Of THEODORE! in thoughts unspeakable,  
Convulsed with horror, o'er her face she clasp'd  
Her cold damp hands: 'Shrink not,' the Phantom cried,  
'Gaze on! for ever gaze!' more firm he grasp'd  
Her quivering arm: 'this lifeless mouldering clay,  
As well thou know'st, was warm with all the glow  
Of Youth and Love; this is the arm that cleaved  
Salisbury's proud crest, now motionless in death,  
Unable to protect the ravaged frame  
From the foul Offspring of Mortality  
That feed on heroes. Tho' long years were thine,  
Yet never more would life reanimate  
This murdered man; murdered by thee! for thou  
Didst lead him to the battle from his home,  
Else living there in peace to good old age:  
In thy defence he died: strike deep! destroy  
Remorse with Life.'

The Maid stood motionless,  
And, wistless what she did, with trembling hand  
Received the dagger. Starting then, she cried,  
'Avaunt DESPAIR! Eternal Wisdom deals  
Or peace to man, or misery, for his good  
Alike design'd; and shall the Creature cry,  
Why hast thou done this? and with impious pride  
Destroy the life God gave?'

The Fiend rejoin'd,  
'And thou dost deem it impious to destroy  
The life God gave? What, Maiden, is the lot  
Assigned to mortal man? born but to drag,  
Thro' life's long pilgrimage, the wearying load  
Of being; care corroded at the heart;  
Assail'd by all the numerous train of ills  
That flesh inherits; till at length worn out,  
This is his consummation!--think again!  
What, Maiden, canst thou hope from lengthen'd life



But lengthen'd sorrow? If protracted long,  
Till on the bed of death thy feeble limbs  
Outstretch their languid length, oh think what thoughts,  
What agonizing woes, in that dread hour,  
Assail the sinking heart! slow beats the pulse,  
Dim grows the eye, and clammy drops bedew  
The shuddering frame; then in its mightiest force,  
Mightiest in impotence, the love of life  
Seizes the throbbing heart, the faltering lips  
Pour out the impious prayer, that fain would change  
The unchangeable's decree, surrounding friends  
Sob round the sufferer, wet his cheek with tears,  
And all he loved in life embitters death!

Such, Maiden, are the pangs that wait the hour  
Of calmest dissolution! yet weak man  
Dares, in his timid piety, to live;  
And veiling Fear in Superstition's garb,  
He calls her Resignation!  
Coward wretch!  
Fond Coward! thus to make his Reason war  
Against his Reason! Insect as he is,  
This sport of Chance, this being of a day,  
Whose whole existence the next cloud may blast,  
Believes himself the care of heavenly powers,  
That God regards Man, miserable Man,  
And preaching thus of Power and Providence,  
Will crush the reptile that may cross his path!

Fool that thou art! the Being that permits  
Existence, 'gives' to man the worthless boon:  
A goodly gift to those who, fortune-blest,  
Bask in the sunshine of Prosperity,  
And such do well to keep it. But to one  
Sick at the heart with misery, and sore  
With many a hard unmerited affliction,  
It is a hair that chains to wretchedness  
The slave who dares not burst it!  
Thinkest thou,  
The parent, if his child should unrecall'd  
Return and fall upon his neck, and cry,  
Oh! the wide world is comfortless, and full

Of vacant joys and heart-consuming cares,  
 I can be only happy in my home  
 With thee--my friend!--my father! Thinkest thou,  
 That he would thrust him as an outcast forth?  
 Oh I he would clasp the truant to his heart,  
 And love the trespass.'  
 Whilst he spake, his eye  
 Dwelt on the Maiden's cheek, and read her soul  
 Struggling within. In trembling doubt she stood,  
 Even as the wretch, whose famish'd entrails crave  
 Supply, before him sees the poison'd food  
 In greedy horror.  
 Yet not long the Maid  
 Debated, 'Cease thy dangerous sophistry,  
 Eloquent tempter!' cried she. 'Gloomy one!  
 What tho' affliction be my portion here,  
 Think'st thou I do not feel high thoughts of joy.  
 Of heart-ennobling joy, when I look back  
 Upon a life of duty well perform'd,  
 Then lift mine eyes to Heaven, and there in faith  
 Know my reward? I grant, were this life all,  
 Was there no morning to the tomb's long night,  
 If man did mingle with the senseless clod,  
 Himself as senseless, then wert thou indeed  
 A wise and friendly comforter! But, Fiend!  
 There is a morning to the tomb's long night,  
 A dawn of glory, a reward in Heaven,  
 He shall not gain who never merited.  
 If thou didst know the worth of one good deed  
 In life's last hour, thou would'st not bid me lose  
 The power to benefit; if I but save  
 A drowning fly, I shall not live in vain.  
 I have great duties, Fiend! me France expects,  
 Her heaven-doom'd Champion.'  
 'Maiden, thou hast done  
 Thy mission here,' the un baffled Fiend replied:  
 'The foes are fled from Orleans: thou, perchance  
 Exulting in the pride of victory,  
 Forgettest him who perish'd! yet albeit  
 Thy harden'd heart forget the gallant youth;  
 That hour allotted canst thou not escape,  
 That dreadful hour, when Contumely and Shame

Shall sojourn in thy dungeon. Wretched Maid!  
 Destined to drain the cup of bitterness,  
 Even to its dregs! England's inhuman Chiefs  
 Shall scoff thy sorrows, black thy spotless fame,  
 Wit-wanton it with lewd barbarity,  
 And force such burning blushes to the cheek  
 Of Virgin modesty, that thou shalt wish  
 The earth might cover thee! in that last hour,  
 When thy bruise'd breast shall heave beneath the chains  
 That link thee to the stake; when o'er thy form,  
 Exposed unmantled, the brute multitude  
 Shall gaze, and thou shalt hear the ribald taunt,  
 More painful than the circling flames that scorch  
 Each quivering member; wilt thou not in vain  
 Then wish my friendly aid? then wish thine ear  
 Had drank my words of comfort? that thy hand  
 Had grasp'd the dagger, and in death preserved  
 Insulted modesty?'

Her glowing cheek  
 Blush'd crimson; her wide eye on vacancy  
 Was fix'd; her breath short panted. The cold Fiend,  
 Grasping her hand, exclaim'd, 'too-timid Maid,  
 So long repugnant to the healing aid  
 My friendship proffers, now shalt thou behold  
 The allotted length of life.'

He stamp'd the earth,  
 And dragging a huge coffin as his car,  
 Two GOULS came on, of form more fearful-foul  
 Than ever palsied in her wildest dream  
 Hag-ridden Superstition. Then DESPAIR  
 Seiz'd on the Maid whose curdling blood stood still.  
 And placed her in the seat; and on they pass'd  
 Adown the deep descent. A meteor light  
 Shot from the Daemons, as they dragg'd along  
 The unwelcome load, and mark'd their brethren glut  
 On carcasses.

Below the vault dilates  
 Its ample bulk. 'Look here!--DESPAIR address  
 The shuddering Virgin, 'see the dome of DEATH!'

It was a spacious cavern, hewn amid  
 The entrails of the earth, as tho' to form  
 The grave of all mankind: no eye could reach,

Tho' gifted with the Eagle's ample ken,  
Its distant bounds. There, thron'd in darkness, dwelt  
The unseen POWER OF DEATH.  
Here stopt the GOULS,  
Reaching the destin'd spot. The Fiend leapt out,  
And from the coffin, as he led the Maid,  
Exclaim'd, 'Where never yet stood mortal man,  
Thou standest: look around this boundless vault;  
Observe the dole that Nature deals to man,  
And learn to know thy friend.'  
She not replied,  
Observing where the Fates their several tasks  
Plied ceaseless. 'Mark how short the longest web  
Allowed to man! he cried; observe how soon,  
Twin'd round yon never-resting wheel, they change  
Their snowy hue, darkening thro' many a shade,  
Till Atropos relentless shuts the sheers!'

Too true he spake, for of the countless threads,  
Drawn from the heap, as white as unsunn'd snow,  
Or as the lovely lilly of the vale,  
Was never one beyond the little span  
Of infancy untainted: few there were  
But lightly tinged; more of deep crimson hue,  
Or deeper sable died. Two Genii stood,  
Still as the web of Being was drawn forth,  
Sprinkling their powerful drops. From ebon urn,  
The one unsparing dash'd the bitter wave  
Of woe; and as he dash'd, his dark-brown brow  
Relax'd to a hard smile. The milder form  
Shed less profusely there his lesser store;  
Sometimes with tears increasing the scant boon,  
Mourning the lot of man; and happy he  
Who on his thread those precious drops receives;  
If it be happiness to have the pulse  
Throb fast with pity, and in such a world  
Of wretchedness, the generous heart that aches  
With anguish at the sight of human woe.

To her the Fiend, well hoping now success,  
'This is thy thread! observe how short the span,  
And see how copious yonder Genius pours

The bitter stream of woe.' The Maiden saw  
Fearless. 'Now gaze!' the tempter Fiend exclaim'd,  
And placed again the poniard in her hand,  
For SUPERSTITION, with sulphureal torch  
Stalk'd to the loom. 'This, Damsel, is thy fate!  
The hour draws on--now drench the dagger deep!  
Now rush to happier worlds!'  
The Maid replied,  
'Or to prevent or change the will of Heaven,  
Impious I strive not: be that will perform'd!'

On a rock more high  
Than Nature's common surface, she beholds  
The Mansion house of Fate, which thus unfolds  
Its sacred mysteries. A trine within  
A quadrate placed, both these encompass in  
A perfect circle was its form; but what  
Its matter was, for us to wonder at,  
Is undiscovered left. A Tower there stands  
At every angle, where Time's fatal hands  
The impartial PARCAE dwell; i' the first she sees  
CLOTHO the kindest of the Destinies,  
From immaterial essences to cull  
The seeds of life, and of them frame the wool  
For LACHESIS to spin; about her flie  
Myriads of souls, that yet want flesh to lie  
Warm'd with their functions in, whose strength bestows  
That power by which man ripe for misery grows.

Her next of objects was that glorious tower  
Where that swift-fingered Nymph that spares no hour  
From mortals' service, draws the various threads  
Of life in several lengths; to weary beds  
Of age extending some, whilst others in  
Their infancy are broke: 'some blackt in sin,  
Others, the favorites of Heaven, from whence  
Their origin, candid with innocence;  
Some purpled in afflictions, others dyed  
In sanguine pleasures': some in glittering pride  
Spun to adorn the earth, whilst others wear  
Rags of deformity, but knots of care  
No thread was wholly free from. Next to this

Fair glorious tower, was placed that black abyss  
Of dreadful ATROPOS, the baleful seat  
Of death and horror, in each room repleat  
With lazy damps, loud groans, and the sad sight  
Of pale grim Ghosts, those terrors of the night.  
To this, the last stage that the winding clew  
Of Life can lead mortality unto,  
FEAR was the dreadful Porter, which let in  
All guests sent thither by destructive sin.

Robert Southey

# The Vision Of The Maid Of Orleans - The Second Book

She spake, and lo! celestial radiance beam'd  
Amid the air, such odors wafting now  
As erst came blended with the evening gale,  
From Eden's bowers of bliss. An angel form  
Stood by the Maid; his wings, ethereal white,  
Flash'd like the diamond in the noon-tide sun,  
Dazzling her mortal eye: all else appear'd  
Her THEODORE.

Amazed she saw: the Fiend  
Was fled, and on her ear the well-known voice  
Sounded, tho' now more musically sweet  
Than ever yet had thrill'd her charmed soul,  
When eloquent Affection fondly told  
The day-dreams of delight.

'Beloved Maid!

Lo! I am with thee! still thy Theodore!  
Hearts in the holy bands of Love combin'd,  
Death has no power to sever. Thou art mine!  
A little while and thou shalt dwell with me  
In scenes where Sorrow is not. Cheerily  
Tread thou the path that leads thee to the grave,  
Rough tho' it be and painful, for the grave  
Is but the threshold of Eternity.

Favour'd of Heaven! to thee is given to view  
These secret realms. The bottom of the abyss  
Thou treadest, Maiden! Here the dungeons are  
Where bad men learn repentance; souls diseased  
Must have their remedy; and where disease  
Is rooted deep, the remedy is long  
Perforce, and painful.'

Thus the Spirit spake,  
And led the Maid along a narrow path,  
Dark gleaming to the light of far-off flames,  
More dread than darkness. Soon the distant sound  
Of clanking anvils, and the lengthened breath  
Provoking fire are heard: and now they reach  
A wide expanded den where all around  
Tremendous furnaces, with hellish blaze,

Flamed dreadful. At the heaving bellows stood  
The meagre form of Care, and as he blew  
To augment the fire, the fire augmented scorch'd  
His wretched limbs: sleepless for ever thus  
He toil'd and toil'd, of toil to reap no end  
But endless toil and never-ending woe.

An aged man went round the infernal vault,  
Urging his workmen to their ceaseless task:  
White were his locks, as is the wintry snow  
On hoar Plinlimmon's head. A golden staff  
His steps supported; powerful talisman,  
Which whoso feels shall never feel again  
The tear of Pity, or the throb of Love.  
Touch'd but by this, the massy gates give way,  
The buttress trembles, and the guarded wall,  
Guarded in vain, submits. Him heathens erst  
Had deified, and bowed the suppliant knee  
To Plutus. Nor are now his votaries few,  
Tho' he the Blessed Teacher of mankind  
Hath said, that easier thro' the needle's eye  
Shall the huge camel pass, than the rich man  
Enter the gates of heaven. 'Ye cannot serve  
Your God, and worship Mammon.'

'Missioned Maid!'

So spake the Angel, 'know that these, whose hands  
Round each white furnace ply the unceasing toil,  
Were Mammon's slaves on earth. They did not spare  
To wring from Poverty the hard-earn'd mite,  
They robb'd the orphan's pittance, they could see  
Want's asking eye unmoved; and therefore these,  
Ranged round the furnace, still must persevere  
In Mammon's service; scorched by these fierce fires,  
And frequent deluged by the o'erboiling ore:  
Yet still so framed, that oft to quench their thirst  
Unquenchable, large draughts of molten gold  
They drink insatiate, still with pain renewed,  
Pain to destroy.'

So saying, her he led  
Forth from the dreadful cavern to a cell,  
Brilliant with gem-born light. The rugged walls  
Part gleam'd with gold, and part with silver ore



A milder radiance shone. The Carbuncle  
There its strong lustre like the flamy sun  
Shot forth irradiate; from the earth beneath,  
And from the roof a diamond light emits;  
Rubies and amethysts their glows commix'd  
With the gay topaz, and the softer ray  
Shot from the sapphire, and the emerald's hue,  
And bright pyropus.  
There on golden seats,  
A numerous, sullen, melancholy train  
Sat silent. 'Maiden, these,' said Theodore,  
Are they who let the love of wealth absorb  
All other passions; in their souls that vice  
Struck deeply-rooted, like the poison-tree  
That with its shade spreads barrenness around.  
These, Maid! were men by no atrocious crime  
Blacken'd, no fraud, nor ruffian violence:  
Men of fair dealing, and respectable  
On earth, but such as only for themselves  
Heap'd up their treasures, deeming all their wealth  
Their own, and given to them, by partial Heaven,  
To bless them only: therefore here they sit,  
Possessed of gold enough, and by no pain  
Tormented, save the knowledge of the bliss  
They lost, and vain repentance. Here they dwell,  
Loathing these useless treasures, till the hour  
Of general restitution.'  
Thence they past,  
And now arrived at such a gorgeous dome,  
As even the pomp of Eastern opulence  
Could never equal: wandered thro' its halls  
A numerous train; some with the red-swoln eye  
Of riot, and intemperance-bloated cheek;  
Some pale and nerveless, and with feeble step,  
And eyes lack-lustre.  
Maiden? said her guide,  
These are the wretched slaves of Appetite,  
Curst with their wish enjoyed. The epicure  
Here pampers his foul frame, till the pall'd sense  
Loaths at the banquet; the voluptuous here  
Plunge in the tempting torrent of delight,  
And sink in misery. All they wish'd on earth,

Possessing here, whom have they to accuse,  
But their own folly, for the lot they chose?  
Yet, for that these injured themselves alone,  
They to the house of PENITENCE may hie,  
And, by a long and painful regimen,  
To wearied Nature her exhausted powers  
Restore, till they shall learn to form the wish  
Of wisdom, and ALMIGHTY GOODNESS grants  
That prize to him who seeks it.'  
Whilst he spake,  
The board is spread. With bloated paunch, and eye  
Fat swoln, and legs whose monstrous size disgraced  
The human form divine, their caterer,  
Hight GLUTTONY, set forth the smoaking feast.  
And by his side came on a brother form,  
With fiery cheek of purple hue, and red  
And scurfy-white, mix'd motley; his gross bulk,  
Like some huge hogshead shapen'd, as applied.  
Him had antiquity with mystic rites  
Ador'd, to him the sons of Greece, and thine  
Imperial Rome, on many an altar pour'd  
The victim blood, with godlike titles graced,  
BACCHUS, or DIONUSUS; son of JOVE,  
Deem'd falsely, for from FOLLY'S ideot form  
He sprung, what time MADNESS, with furious hand,  
Seiz'd on the laughing female. At one birth  
She brought the brethren, menial here, above  
Reigning with sway supreme, and oft they hold  
High revels: mid the Monastery's gloom,  
The sacrifice is spread, when the grave voice  
Episcopal, proclaims approaching day  
Of visitation, or Churchwardens meet  
To save the wretched many from the gripe  
Of eager Poverty, or mid thy halls  
Of London, mighty Mayor! rich Aldermen,  
Of coming feast hold converse.  
Otherwhere,  
For tho' allied in nature as in blood,  
They hold divided sway, his brother lifts  
His spongy sceptre. In the noble domes  
Of Princes, and state-wearied Ministers,  
Maddening he reigns; and when the affrighted mind

Casts o'er a long career of guilt and blood  
Its eye reluctant, then his aid is sought  
To lull the worm of Conscience to repose.  
He too the halls of country Squires frequents,  
But chiefly loves the learned gloom that shades  
Thy offspring Rhedycina! and thy walls,  
Granta! nightly libations there to him  
Profuse are pour'd, till from the dizzy brain  
Triangles, Circles, Parallelograms,  
Moods, Tenses, Dialects, and Demigods,  
And Logic and Theology are swept  
By the red deluge.  
Unmolested there  
He reigns; till comes at length the general feast,  
Septennial sacrifice; then when the sons  
Of England meet, with watchful care to chuse  
Their delegates, wise, independent men,  
Unbribing and unbrib'd, and cull'd to guard  
Their rights and charters from the encroaching grasp  
Of greedy Power: then all the joyful land  
Join in his sacrifices, so inspir'd  
To make the important choice.  
The observing Maid  
Address'd her guide, 'These Theodore, thou sayest  
Are men, who pampering their foul appetites,  
Injured themselves alone. But where are they,  
The worst of villains, viper-like, who coil  
Around the guileless female, so to sting  
The heart that loves them?'  
'Them,' the spirit replied,  
A long and dreadful punishment awaits.  
For when the prey of want and infamy,  
Lower and lower still the victim sinks,  
Even to the depth of shame, not one lewd word,  
One impious imprecation from her lips  
Escapes, nay not a thought of evil lurks  
In the polluted mind, that does not plead  
Before the throne of Justice, thunder-tongued  
Against the foul Seducer.'  
Now they reach'd  
The house of PENITENCE. CREDULITY  
Stood at the gate, stretching her eager head

As tho' to listen; on her vacant face,  
A smile that promis'd premature assent;  
Tho' her REGRET behind, a meagre Fiend,  
Disciplin'd sorely.  
Here they entered in,  
And now arrived where, as in study tranced,  
She sat, the Mistress of the Dome. Her face  
Spake that composed severity, that knows  
No angry impulse, no weak tenderness,  
Resolved and calm. Before her lay that Book  
That hath the words of Life; and as she read,  
Sometimes a tear would trickle down her cheek,  
Tho' heavenly joy beam'd in her eye the while.

Leaving her undisturb'd, to the first ward  
Of this great Lazar-house, the Angel led  
The favour'd Maid of Orleans. Kneeling down  
On the hard stone that their bare knees had worn,  
In sackcloth robed, a numerous train appear'd:  
Hard-featured some, and some demurely grave;  
Yet such expression stealing from the eye,  
As tho', that only naked, all the rest  
Was one close fitting mask. A scoffing Fiend,  
For Fiend he was, tho' wisely serving here  
Mock'd at his patients, and did often pour  
Ashes upon them, and then bid them say  
Their prayers aloud, and then he louder laughed:  
For these were Hypocrites, on earth revered  
As holy ones, who did in public tell  
Their beads, and make long prayers, and cross themselves,  
And call themselves most miserable sinners,  
That so they might be deem'd most pious saints;  
And go all filth, and never let a smile  
Bend their stern muscles, gloomy, sullen men,  
Barren of all affection, and all this  
To please their God, forsooth! and therefore SCORN  
Grinn'd at his patients, making them repeat  
Their solemn farce, with keenest raillery  
Tormenting; but if earnest in their prayer,  
They pour'd the silent sorrows of the soul  
To Heaven, then did they not regard his mocks  
Which then came painless, and HUMILITY

Soon rescued them, and led to PENITENCE,  
That She might lead to Heaven.

From thence they came,  
Where, in the next ward, a most wretched band  
Groan'd underneath the bitter tyranny  
Of a fierce Daemon. His coarse hair was red,  
Pale grey his eyes, and blood-shot; and his face  
Wrinkled by such a smile as Malice wears  
In ecstasy. Well-pleased he went around,  
Plunging his dagger in the hearts of some,  
Or probing with a poison'd lance their breasts,  
Or placing coals of fire within their wounds;  
Or seizing some within his mighty grasp,  
He fix'd them on a stake, and then drew back,  
And laugh'd to see them writhe.

'These,' said the Spirit,  
Are taught by CRUELTY, to loath the lives  
They led themselves. Here are those wicked men  
Who loved to exercise their tyrant power  
On speechless brutes; bad husbands undergo  
A long purgation here; the traffickers  
In human flesh here too are disciplined.  
Till by their suffering they have equall'd all  
The miseries they inflicted, all the mass  
Of wretchedness caused by the wars they waged,  
The towns they burnt, for they who bribe to war  
Are guilty of the blood, the widows left  
In want, the slave or led to suicide,  
Or murdered by the foul infected air  
Of his close dungeon, or more sad than all,  
His virtue lost, his very soul enslaved,  
And driven by woe to wickedness.

These next,  
Whom thou beholdest in this dreary room,  
So sullen, and with such an eye of hate  
Each on the other scowling, these have been  
False friends. Tormented by their own dark thoughts  
Here they dwell: in the hollow of their hearts  
There is a worm that feeds, and tho' thou seest  
That skilful leech who willingly would heal  
The ill they suffer, judging of all else

By their own evil standard, they suspect  
The aid be vainly proffers, lengthening thus  
By vice its punishment.'

'But who are these,'

The Maid exclaim'd, 'that robed in flowing lawn,  
And mitred, or in scarlet, and in caps  
Like Cardinals, I see in every ward,  
Performing menial service at the beck  
Of all who bid them?'

Theodore replied,

These men are they who in the name of CHRIST  
Did heap up wealth, and arrogating power,  
Did make men bow the knee, and call themselves  
Most Reverend Graces and Right Reverend Lords.  
They dwelt in palaces, in purple clothed,  
And in fine linen: therefore are they here;  
And tho' they would not minister on earth,  
Here penanced they perforce must minister:  
For he, the lowly man of Nazareth,  
Hath said, his kingdom is not of the world.'  
So Saying on they past, and now arrived  
Where such a hideous ghastly groupe abode,  
That the Maid gazed with half-averting eye,  
And shudder'd: each one was a loathly corpse,  
The worm did banquet on his putrid prey,  
Yet had they life and feeling exquisite  
Tho' motionless and mute.

'Most wretched men

Are these, the angel cried. These, JOAN, are bards,  
Whose loose lascivious lays perpetuate  
Who sat them down, deliberately lewd,  
So to awake and pamper lust in minds  
Unborn; and therefore foul of body now  
As then they were of soul, they here abide  
Long as the evil works they left on earth  
Shall live to taint mankind. A dreadful doom!  
Yet amply merited by that bad man  
Who prostitutes the sacred gift of song!  
And now they reached a huge and massy pile,  
Massy it seem'd, and yet in every blast  
As to its ruin shook. There, porter fit,  
REMORSE for ever his sad vigils kept.

Pale, hollow-eyed, emaciate, sleepless wretch.  
Inly he groan'd, or, starting, wildly shriek'd,  
Aye as the fabric tottering from its base,  
Threatened its fall, and so expectant still  
Lived in the dread of danger still delayed.

They enter'd there a large and lofty dome,  
O'er whose black marble sides a dim drear light  
Struggled with darkness from the unfrequent lamp.  
Enthroned around, the MURDERERS OF MANKIND,  
Monarchs, the great! the glorious! the august!  
Each bearing on his brow a crown of fire,  
Sat stern and silent. Nimrod he was there,  
First King the mighty hunter; and that Chief  
Who did belie his mother's fame, that so  
He might be called young Ammon. In this court  
Caesar was crown'd, accurst liberticide;  
And he who murdered Tully, that cold villain,  
Octavius, tho' the courtly minion's lyre  
Hath hymn'd his praise, tho' Maro sung to him,  
And when Death levelled to original clay  
The royal carcase, FLATTERY, fawning low,  
Fell at his feet, and worshipp'd the new God.  
Titus was here, the Conqueror of the Jews,  
He the Delight of human-kind misnamed;  
Caesars and Soldans, Emperors and Kings,  
Here they were all, all who for glory fought,  
Here in the COURT OF GLORY, reaping now  
The meed they merited.

As gazing round  
The Virgin mark'd the miserable train,  
A deep and hollow voice from one went forth;  
'Thou who art come to view our punishment,  
Maiden of Orleans! hither turn thine eyes,  
For I am he whose bloody victories  
Thy power hath rendered vain. Lo! I am here,  
The hero conqueror of Azincour,  
HENRY OF ENGLAND!--wretched that I am,  
I might have reigned in happiness and peace,  
My coffers full, my subjects undisturb'd,  
And PLENTY and PROSPERITY had loved  
To dwell amongst them: but mine eye beheld

The realm of France, by faction tempest-torn,  
And therefore I did think that it would fall  
An easy prey. I persecuted those  
Who taught new doctrines, tho' they taught the truth:  
And when I heard of thousands by the sword  
Cut off, or blasted by the pestilence,  
I calmly counted up my proper gains,  
And sent new herds to slaughter. Temperate  
Myself, no blood that mutinied, no vice  
Tainting my private life, I sent abroad  
MURDER and RAPE; and therefore am I doom'd,  
Like these imperial Sufferers, crown'd with fire,  
Here to remain, till Man's awaken'd eye  
Shall see the genuine blackness of our deeds,  
And warn'd by them, till the whole human race,  
Equalling in bliss the aggregate we caus'd  
Of wretchedness, shall form ONE BROTHERHOOD,  
ONE UNIVERSAL FAMILY OF LOVE.'

Ay, you are wretched, miserably wretched,  
Almost condemn'd alive! There is a place,  
(List daughter!) in a black and hollow vault,  
Where day is never seen; there shines no sun,  
But flaming horror of consuming fires;  
A lightless sulphur, choak'd with smoaky foggs  
Of an infected darkness. In this place  
Dwell many thousand thousand sundry sorts  
Of never-dying deaths; there damned souls  
Roar without pity, there are gluttons fed  
With toads and adders; there is burning oil  
Pour'd down the drunkard's throat, 'the usurer  
Is forced to sup whole draughts of molten gold';  
There is the murderer for ever stabb'd,  
Yet can he never die; there lies the wanton  
On racks of burning steel, whilst in his soul  
He feels the torment of his raging lust.

Robert Southey



# The Vision Of The Maid Of Orleans - The Third Book

The Maiden, musing on the Warrior's words,  
Turn'd from the Hall of Glory. Now they reach'd  
A cavern, at whose mouth a Genius stood,  
In front a beardless youth, whose smiling eye  
Beam'd promise, but behind, withered and old,  
And all unlovely. Underneath his feet  
Lay records trampled, and the laurel wreath  
Now rent and faded: in his hand he held  
An hour-glass, and as fall the restless sands,  
So pass the lives of men. By him they past  
Along the darksome cave, and reach'd a stream,  
Still rolling onward its perpetual waves,  
Noiseless and undisturbed. Here they ascend  
A Bark unpiloted, that down the flood,  
Borne by the current, rush'd. The circling stream,  
Returning to itself, an island form'd;  
Nor had the Maiden's footsteps ever reach'd  
The insulated coast, eternally  
Rapt round the endless course; but Theodore  
Drove with an angel's will the obedient bark.

They land, a mighty fabric meets their eyes,  
Seen by its gem-born light. Of adamant  
The pile was framed, for ever to abide  
Firm in eternal strength. Before the gate  
Stood eager EXPECTATION, as to list  
The half-heard murmurs issuing from within,  
Her mouth half-open'd, and her head stretch'd forth.  
On the other side there stood an aged Crone,  
Listening to every breath of air; she knew  
Vague suppositions and uncertain dreams,  
Of what was soon to come, for she would mark  
The paley glow-worm's self-created light,  
And argue thence of kingdoms overthrown,  
And desolated nations; ever fill'd  
With undetermin'd terror, as she heard  
Or distant screech-owl, or the regular beat  
Of evening death-watch.  
'Maid,' the Spirit cried,

Here, robed in shadows, dwells FUTURITY.  
There is no eye hath seen her secret form,  
For round the MOTHER OF TIME, unpierced mists  
Aye hover. Would'st thou read the book of Fate,  
Enter.'

The Damsel for a moment paus'd,  
Then to the Angel spake: 'All-gracious Heaven!  
Benignant in withholding, hath denied  
To man that knowledge. I, in faith assured,  
That he, my heavenly Father, for the best  
Ordaineth all things, in that faith remain  
Contented.'

'Well and wisely hast thou said,  
So Theodore replied; 'and now O Maid!  
Is there amid this boundless universe  
One whom thy soul would visit? is there place  
To memory dear, or visioned out by hope,  
Where thou would'st now be present? form the wish,  
And I am with thee, there.'

His closing speech

Yet sounded on her ear, and lo! they stood  
Swift as the sudden thought that guided them,  
Within the little cottage that she loved.

'He sleeps! the good man sleeps!' enrapt she cried,  
As bending o'er her Uncle's lowly bed

Her eye retraced his features. 'See the beads  
That never morn nor night he fails to tell,  
Remembering me, his child, in every prayer.

Oh! quiet be thy sleep, thou dear old man!

Good Angels guard thy rest! and when thine hour  
Is come, as gently mayest thou wake to life,  
As when thro' yonder lattice the next sun  
Shall bid thee to thy morning orisons!

Thy voice is heard, the Angel guide rejoin'd,

He sees thee in his dreams, he hears thee breathe  
Blessings, and pleasant is the good man's rest.

Thy fame has reached him, for who has not heard  
Thy wonderous exploits? and his aged heart

Hath felt the deepest joy that ever yet

Made his glad blood flow fast. Sleep on old Claude!

Peaceful, pure Spirit, be thy sojourn here,

And short and soon thy passage to that world

Where friends shall part no more!  
'Does thy soul own  
No other wish? or sleeps poor Madelon  
Forgotten in her grave? seest thou yon star,'  
The Spirit pursued, regardless of her eye  
That look'd reproach; 'seest thou that evening star  
Whose lovely light so often we beheld  
From yonder woodbine porch? how have we gazed  
Into the dark deep sky, till the baffled soul,  
Lost in the infinite, returned, and felt  
The burthen of her bodily load, and yearned  
For freedom! Maid, in yonder evening star  
Lives thy departed friend. I read that glance,  
And we are there!'  
He said and they had past  
The immeasurable space.  
Then on her ear  
The lonely song of adoration rose,  
Sweet as the cloister'd virgins vesper hymn,  
Whose spirit, happily dead to earthly hopes  
Already lives in Heaven. Abrupt the song  
Ceas'd, tremulous and quick a cry  
Of joyful wonder rous'd the astonish'd Maid,  
And instant Madelon was in her arms;  
No airy form, no unsubstantial shape,  
She felt her friend, she prest her to her heart,  
Their tears of rapture mingled.  
She drew back  
And eagerly she gazed on Madelon,  
Then fell upon her neck again and wept.  
No more she saw the long-drawn lines of grief,  
The emaciate form, the hue of sickliness,  
The languid eye: youth's loveliest freshness now  
Mantled her cheek, whose every lineament  
Bespoke the soul at rest, a holy calm,  
A deep and full tranquillity of bliss.

'Thou then art come, my first and dearest friend!'  
The well known voice of Madelon began,  
'Thou then art come! and was thy pilgrimage  
So short on earth? and was it painful too,  
Painful and short as mine? but blessed they

Who from the crimes and miseries of the world  
Early escape!

'Nay,' Theodore replied,

She hath not yet fulfill'd her mortal work.

Permitted visitant from earth she comes

To see the seat of rest, and oftentimes

In sorrow shall her soul remember this,

And patient of the transitory woe

Partake the anticipated peace again.'

'Soon be that work perform'd!' the Maid exclaimed,

'O Madelon! O Theodore! my soul,

Spurning the cold communion of the world,

Will dwell with you! but I shall patiently,

Yea even with joy, endure the allotted ills

Of which the memory in this better state

Shall heighten bliss. That hour of agony,

When, Madelon, I felt thy dying grasp,

And from thy forehead wiped the dews of death,

The very horrors of that hour assume

A shape that now delights.'

'O earliest friend!

I too remember,' Madelon replied,

'That hour, thy looks of watchful agony,

The suppressed grief that struggled in thine eye

Endearing love's last kindness. Thou didst know

With what a deep and melancholy joy

I felt the hour draw on: but who can speak

The unutterable transport, when mine eyes,

As from a long and dreary dream, unclosed

Amid this peaceful vale, unclos'd on him,

My Arnaud! he had built me up a bower,

A bower of rest.--See, Maiden, where he comes,

His manly lineaments, his beaming eye

The same, but now a holier innocence

Sits on his cheek, and loftier thoughts illumine

The enlighten'd glance.'

They met, what joy was theirs

He best can feel, who for a dear friend dead

Has wet the midnight pillow with his tears.

Fair was the scene around; an ample vale

Whose mountain circle at the distant verge

Lay softened on the sight; the near ascent  
Rose bolder up, in part abrupt and bare,  
Part with the ancient majesty of woods  
Adorn'd, or lifting high its rocks sublime.  
The river's liquid radiance roll'd beneath,  
Beside the bower of Madelon it wound  
A broken stream, whose shallows, tho' the waves  
Roll'd on their way with rapid melody,  
A child might tread. Behind, an orange grove  
Its gay green foliage starr'd with golden fruit;  
But with what odours did their blossoms load  
The passing gale of eve! less thrilling sweet  
Rose from the marble's perforated floor,  
Where kneeling at her prayers, the Moorish queen  
Inhaled the cool delight, and whilst she asked  
The Prophet for his promised paradise,  
Shaped from the present scene its utmost joys.  
A goodly scene! fair as that faery land  
Where Arthur lives, by ministering spirits borne  
From Camlan's bloody banks; or as the groves  
Of earliest Eden, where, so legends say,  
Enoch abides, and he who rapt away  
By fiery steeds, and chariotted in fire,  
Past in his mortal form the eternal ways;  
And John, beloved of Christ, enjoying there  
The beatific vision, sometimes seen  
The distant dawning of eternal day,  
Till all things be fulfilled.

'Survey this scene!'

So Theodore address'd the Maid of Arc,  
'There is no evil here, no wretchedness,  
It is the Heaven of those who nurst on earth  
Their nature's gentlest feelings. Yet not here  
Centering their joys, but with a patient hope,  
Waiting the allotted hour when capable  
Of loftier callings, to a better state  
They pass; and hither from that better state  
Frequent they come, preserving so those ties  
That thro' the infinite progressiveness  
Complete our perfect bliss.

'Even such, so blest,

Save that the memory of no sorrows past

Heightened the present joy, our world was once,  
In the first aera of its innocence  
Ere man had learnt to bow the knee to man.  
Was there a youth whom warm affection fill'd,  
He spake his honest heart; the earliest fruits  
His toil produced, the sweetest flowers that deck'd  
The sunny bank, he gather'd for the maid,  
Nor she disdain'd the gift; for VICE not yet  
Had burst the dungeons of her hell, and rear'd  
Those artificial boundaries that divide  
Man from his species. State of blessedness!  
Till that ill-omen'd hour when Cain's stern son  
Delved in the bowels of the earth for gold,  
Accursed bane of virtue! of such force  
As poets feign dwelt in the Gorgon's locks,  
Which whoso saw, felt instant the life-blood  
Cold curdle in his veins, the creeping flesh  
Grew stiff with horror, and the heart forgot  
To beat. Accursed hour! for man no more  
To JUSTICE paid his homage, but forsook  
Her altars, and bow'd down before the shrine  
Of WEALTH and POWER, the Idols he had made.  
Then HELL enlarged herself, her gates flew wide,  
Her legion fiends rush'd forth. OPPRESSION came  
Whose frown is desolation, and whose breath  
Blasts like the Pestilence; and POVERTY,  
A meagre monster, who with withering touch  
Makes barren all the better part of man,  
MOTHER OF MISERIES. Then the goodly earth  
Which God had fram'd for happiness, became  
One theatre of woe, and all that God  
Had given to bless free men, these tyrant fiends  
His bitterest curses made. Yet for the best  
Hath he ordained all things, the ALL-WISE!  
For by experience rous'd shall man at length  
Dash down his Moloch-Idols, Samson-like  
And burst his fetters, only strong whilst strong  
Believed. Then in the bottomless abyss  
OPPRESSION shall be chain'd, and POVERTY  
Die, and with her, her brood of Miseries;  
And VIRTUE and EQUALITY preserve  
The reign of LOVE, and Earth shall once again

Be Paradise, whilst WISDOM shall secure  
The state of bliss which IGNORANCE betrayed.'

'Oh age of happiness!' the Maid exclaim'd,  
Roll fast thy current, Time till that blest age  
Arrive! and happy thou my Theodore,  
Permitted thus to see the sacred depths  
Of wisdom!'

'Such,' the blessed Spirit replied,  
Beloved! such our lot; allowed to range  
The vast infinity, progressive still  
In knowledge and encreasing blessedness,  
This our united portion. Thou hast yet  
A little while to sojourn amongst men:  
I will be with thee! there shall not a breeze  
Wanton around thy temples, on whose wing  
I will not hover near! and at that hour  
When from its fleshly sepulchre let loose,  
Thy phoenix soul shall soar, O best-beloved!  
I will be with thee in thine agonies,  
And welcome thee to life and happiness,  
Eternal infinite beatitude!'

He spake, and led her near a straw-roof'd cot,  
LOVE'S Palace. By the Virtues circled there,  
The cherub listen'd to such melodies,  
As aye, when one good deed is register'd  
Above, re-echo in the halls of Heaven.  
LABOUR was there, his crisp locks floating loose,  
Clear was his cheek, and beaming his full eye,  
And strong his arm robust; the wood-nymph HEALTH  
Still follow'd on his path, and where he trod  
Fresh flowers and fruits arose. And there was HOPE,  
The general friend; and PITY, whose mild eye  
Wept o'er the widowed dove; and, loveliest form,  
Majestic CHASTITY, whose sober smile  
Delights and awes the soul; a laurel wreath  
Restrain'd her tresses, and upon her breast  
The snow-drop hung its head, that seem'd to grow  
Spontaneous, cold and fair: still by the maid  
LOVE went submiss, with eye more dangerous  
Than fancied basilisk to wound whoe'er

Too bold approached; yet anxious would he read  
Her every rising wish, then only pleased  
When pleasing. Hymning him the song was rais'd.

'Glory to thee whose vivifying power  
Pervades all Nature's universal frame!  
Glory to thee CREATOR LOVE! to thee,  
Parent of all the smiling CHARITIES,  
That strew the thorny path of Life with flowers!  
Glory to thee PRESERVER! to thy praise  
The awakened woodlands echo all the day  
Their living melody; and warbling forth  
To thee her twilight song, the Nightingale  
Holds the lone Traveller from his way, or charms  
The listening Poet's ear. Where LOVE shall deign  
To fix his seat, there blameless PLEASURE sheds  
Her roseate dews; CONTENT will sojourn there,  
And HAPPINESS behold AFFECTION'S eye  
Gleam with the Mother's smile. Thrice happy he  
Who feels thy holy power! he shall not drag,  
Forlorn and friendless, along Life's long path  
To Age's drear abode; he shall not waste  
The bitter evening of his days unsooth'd;  
But HOPE shall cheer his hours of Solitude,  
And VICE shall vainly strive to wound his breast,  
That bears that talisman; and when he meets  
The eloquent eye of TENDERNESS, and hears  
The bosom-thrilling music of her voice;  
The joy he feels shall purify his Soul,  
And imp it for anticipated Heaven.'

Robert Southey



# The Well Of St. Keyne

A Well there is in the west country,  
And a clearer one never was seen;  
There is not a wife in the west country  
But has heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm-tree stand beside,  
And behind doth an ash-tree grow,  
And a willow from the bank above  
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne;  
Joyfully he drew nigh,  
For from the cock-crow he had been travelling,  
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,  
For thirsty and hot was he,  
And he sat down upon the bank  
Under the willow-tree.

There came a man from the house hard by  
At the Well to fill his pail;  
On the Well-side he rested it,  
And he bade the Stranger hail.

"Now art thou a bachelor, Stranger?" quoth he,  
"For an if thou hast a wife,  
The happiest draught thou hast drank this day  
That ever thou didst in thy life.

"Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast,  
Ever here in Cornwall been?  
For an if she have, I'll venture my life  
She has drank of the Well of St. Keyne."

"I have left a good woman who never was here."  
The Stranger he made reply,  
"But that my draught should be the better for that,  
I pray you answer me why?"

"St. Keyne," quoth the Cornish-man, "many a time  
Drank of this crystal Well,  
And before the Angel summon'd her,  
She laid on the water a spell.

"If the Husband of this gifted Well  
Shall drink before his Wife,  
A happy man thenceforth is he,  
For he shall be Master for life.

"But if the Wife should drink of it first,--  
God help the Husband then!"  
The Stranger stoopt to the Well of St. Keyne,  
And drank of the water again.

"You drank of the Well I warrant betimes?"  
He to the Cornish-man said:  
But the Cornish-man smiled as the Stranger spake,  
And sheepishly shook his head.

"I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,  
And left my Wife in the porch;  
But i' faith she had been wiser than me,  
For she took a bottle to Church."

Robert Southey

# The Widow

Cold was the night wind, drifting fast the snows fell,  
Wide were the downs and shelterless and naked,  
When a poor Wanderer struggled on her journey  
    Weary and way-sore.

Drear were the downs, more dreary her reflexions;  
Cold was the night wind, colder was her bosom!  
She had no home, the world was all before her,  
    She had no shelter.

Fast o'er the bleak heath rattling drove a chariot,  
"Pity me!" feebly cried the poor night wanderer.  
"Pity me Strangers! lest with cold and hunger  
    Here I should perish.

"Once I had friends,--but they have all forsook me!  
"Once I had parents,--they are now in Heaven!  
"I had a home once--I had once a husband--  
    "Pity me Strangers!

"I had a home once--I had once a husband--  
"I am a Widow poor and broken-hearted!"  
Loud blew the wind, unheard was her complaining.  
    On drove the chariot.

On the cold snows she laid her down to rest her;  
She heard a horseman, "pity me!" she groan'd out;  
Loud blew the wind, unheard was her complaining,  
    On went the horseman.

Worn out with anguish, toil and cold and hunger,  
Down sunk the Wanderer, sleep had seiz'd her senses;  
There, did the Traveller find her in the morning,  
    GOD had releas't her.

Robert Southey

## To A Goose

If thou didst feed on western plains of yore  
Or waddle wide with flat and flabby feet  
Over some Cambrian mountain's plashy moor,  
Or find in farmer's yard a safe retreat  
From gipsy thieves and foxes sly and fleet;  
If thy grey quills by lawyer guided, trace  
Deeds big with ruin to some wretched race,  
Or love-sick poet's sonnet, sad and sweet,  
Wailing the rigour of some lady fair;  
Or if, the drudge of housemaid's daily toil,  
Cobwebs and dust thy pinion white besoil,  
Departed goose! I neither know nor care.  
But this I know, that thou wert very fine,  
Seasoned with sage and onions and port wine.

Robert Southey

# To Contemplation

Faint gleams the evening radiance thro' the sky,  
The sober twilight dimly darkens round;  
In short quick circles the shrill bat flits by,  
And the slow vapour curls along the ground.

Now the pleas'd eye from yon lone cottage sees  
On the green mead the smoke long-shadowing play;  
The Red-breast on the blossom'd spray  
Warbles wild her latest lay,  
And sleeps along the dale the silent breeze.  
Calm CONTEMPLATION, 'tis thy favorite hour!  
Come fill my bosom, tranquillizing Power.

Meek Power! I view thee on the calmy shore  
When Ocean stills his waves to rest;  
Or when slow-moving on the surge's hoar  
Meet with deep hollow roar  
And whiten o'er his breast;  
For lo! the Moon with softer radiance gleams,  
And lovelier heave the billows in her beams.

When the low gales of evening moan along,  
I love with thee to feel the calm cool breeze,  
And roam the pathless forest wilds among,  
Listening the mellow murmur of the trees  
Full-foliaged as they lift their arms on high  
And wave their shadowy heads in wildest melody.

Or lead me where amid the tranquil vale  
The broken stream flows on in silver light,  
And I will linger where the gale  
O'er the bank of violets sighs,  
Listening to hear its soften'd sounds arise;  
And hearken the dull beetle's drowsy flight,  
And watch the horn-eyed snail  
Creep o'er his long moon-glittering trail,  
And mark where radiant thro' the night  
Moves in the grass-green hedge the glow-worms living light.

Thee meekest Power! I love to meet,  
As oft with even solitary pace  
The scatter'd Abbeys hallowed rounds I trace  
And listen to the echoings of my feet.  
Or on the half demolished tomb,  
Whole warning texts anticipate my doom:  
Mark the clear orb of night  
Cast thro' the storying glass a faintly-varied light.

Nor will I not in some more gloomy hour  
Invoke with fearless awe thine holier power,  
Wandering beneath the sainted pile  
When the blast moans along the darksome aisle,  
And clattering patters all around  
The midnight shower with dreary sound.

But sweeter 'tis to wander wild  
By melancholy dreams beguil'd,  
While the summer moon's pale ray  
Faintly guides me on my way  
To the lone romantic glen  
Far from all the haunts of men,  
Where no noise of uproar rude  
Breaks the calm of solitude.  
But soothing Silence sleeps in all  
Save the neighbouring waterfall,  
Whose hoarse waters falling near  
Load with hollow sounds the ear,  
And with down-dasht torrent white  
Gleam hoary thro' the shades of night.

Thus wandering silent on and slow  
I'll nurse Reflection's sacred woe,  
And muse upon the perish'd day  
When Hope would weave her visions gay,  
Ere FANCY chill'd by adverse fate  
Left sad REALITY my mate.

O CONTEMPLATION! when to Memory's eyes  
The visions of the long-past days arise,  
Thy holy power imparts the best relief,  
And the calm'd Spirit loves the joy of grief.

Robert Southey

# To Horror

Dark HORROR, hear my call!  
Stern Genius hear from thy retreat  
On some old sepulchre's moss-cankered seat,  
Beneath the Abbey's ivied wall  
That trembles o'er its shade;  
Where wrapt in midnight gloom, alone,  
Thou lovest to lie and hear  
The roar of waters near,  
And listen to the deep dull groan  
Of some perturbed sprite  
Borne fitful on the heavy gales of night.

Or whether o'er some wide waste hill  
Thou mark'st the traveller stray,  
Bewilder'd on his lonely way,  
When, loud and keen and chill,  
The evening winds of winter blow  
Drifting deep the dismal snow.

Or if thou followest now on Greenland's shore,  
With all thy terrors, on the lonely way  
Of some wrecked mariner, when to the roar  
Of herded bears the floating ice-hills round  
Pour their deep echoing sound,  
And by the dim drear Boreal light  
Givest half his dangers to the wretches sight.

Or if thy fury form,  
When o'er the midnight deep  
The dark-wing'd tempests sweep  
Watches from some high cliff the encreasing storm,  
Listening with strange delight  
As the black billows to the thunder rave  
When by the lightnings light  
Thou seest the tall ship sink beneath the wave.

Dark HORROR! bear me where the field of fight  
Scatters contagion on the tainted gale,  
When to the Moon's faint beam,



On many a carcass shine the dews of night  
And a dead silence stills the vale  
Save when at times is heard the gluttoned Raven's scream.

Where some wreck'd army from the Conquerors might  
Speed their disastrous flight,  
With thee fierce Genius! let me trace their way,  
And hear at times the deep heart-groan  
Of some poor sufferer left to die alone,  
His sore wounds smarting with the winds of night;  
And we will pause, where, on the wild,  
The Mother to her frozen breast,  
On the heap'd snows reclining clasps her child  
And with him sleeps, chill'd to eternal rest!

Black HORROR! speed we to the bed of Death,  
Where he whose murderous power afar  
Blasts with the myriad plagues of war,  
Struggles with his last breath,  
Then to his wildly-starting eyes  
The phantoms of the murder'd rise,  
Then on his frenzied ear  
Their groans for vengeance and the Demon's yell  
In one heart-maddening chorus swell.  
Cold on his brow convulsing stands the dew,  
And night eternal darkens on his view.

HORROR! I call thee yet once more!  
Bear me to that accursed shore  
Where round the stake the impaled Negro writhes.  
Assume thy sacred terrors then! dispense  
The blasting gales of Pestilence!  
Arouse the race of Afric! holy Power,  
Lead them to vengeance! and in that dread hour  
When Ruin rages wide  
I will behold and smile by MERCY'S side.

Robert Southey

# To Mary Wollstonecraft

The lilly cheek, the "purple light of love,"  
The liquid lustre of the melting eye,--  
Mary! of these the Poet sung, for these  
Did Woman triumph! with no angry frown  
View this degrading conquest. At that age  
No MAID OF ARC had snatch'd from coward man  
The heaven-blest sword of Liberty; thy sex  
Could boast no female ROLAND'S martyrdom;  
No CORDE'S angel and avenging arm  
Had sanctified again the Murderer's name  
As erst when Caesar perish'd: yet some strains  
May even adorn this theme, befitting me  
To offer, nor unworthy thy regard.

Robert Southey

# To My Own Minature Picture Taken At Two Years Of Age

And I was once like this! that glowing cheek  
Was mine, those pleasure-sparkling eyes, that brow  
Smooth as the level lake, when not a breeze  
Dies o'er the sleeping surface! twenty years  
Have wrought strange alteration! Of the friends  
Who once so dearly prized this miniature,  
And loved it for its likeness, some are gone  
To their last home; and some, estranged in heart,  
Beholding me with quick-averted glance  
Pass on the other side! But still these hues  
Remain unalter'd, and these features wear  
The look of Infancy and Innocence.  
I search myself in vain, and find no trace  
Of what I was: those lightly-arching lines  
Dark and o'erhanging now; and that mild face  
Settled in these strong lineaments!--There were  
Who form'd high hopes and flattering ones of thee  
Young Robert! for thine eye was quick to speak  
Each opening feeling: should they not have known  
When the rich rainbow on the morning cloud  
Reflects its radiant dies, the husbandman  
Beholds the ominous glory sad, and fears  
Impending storms? they augur'd happily,  
For thou didst love each wild and wonderous tale  
Of faery fiction, and thine infant tongue  
Lisp'd with delight the godlike deeds of Greece  
And rising Rome; therefore they deem'd forsooth  
That thou shouldst tread PREFERMENT'S pleasant path.  
Ill-judging ones! they let thy little feet  
Stray in the pleasant paths of POESY,  
And when thou shouldst have prest amid the crowd  
There didst thou love to linger out the day  
Loitering beneath the laurels barren shade.  
SPIRIT of SPENSER! was the wanderer wrong?  
This little picture was for ornament  
Design'd, to shine amid the motley mob  
Of Fashion and of Folly,--is it not

More honour'd by this solitary song?

Robert Southey

# To The Chapel Bell

"Lo I, the man who erst the Muse did ask  
Her deepest notes to swell the Patriot's meeds,  
Am now enforst a far unfitter task  
For cap and gown to leave my minstrel weeds,"  
For yon dull noise that tinkles on the air  
Bids me lay by the lyre and go to morning prayer.

Oh how I hate the sound! it is the Knell,  
That still a requiem tolls to Comfort's hour;  
And loth am I, at Superstition's bell,  
To quit or Morpheus or the Muses bower.  
Better to lie and dose, than gape amain,  
Hearing still mumbled o'er, the same eternal strain.

Thou tedious herald of more tedious prayers  
Say hast thou ever summoned from his rest,  
One being awakening to religious awe?  
Or rous'd one pious transport in the breast?  
Or rather, do not all reluctant creep  
To linger out the hour, in listlessness or sleep?

I love the bell, that calls the poor to pray  
Chiming from village church its chearful sound,  
When the sun smiles on Labour's holy day,  
And all the rustic train are gathered round,  
Each deftly dizen'd in his Sunday's best  
And pleas'd to hail the day of piety and rest.

Or when, dim-shadowing o'er the face of day,  
The mantling mists of even-tide rise slow,  
As thro' the forest gloom I wend my way,  
The minster curfew's sullen roar I know;  
I pause and love its solemn toll to hear,  
As made by distance soft, it dies upon the ear.

Nor not to me the unfrequent midnight knell  
Tolls sternly harmonizing; on mine ear  
As the deep death-fraught sounds long lingering dwell  
Sick to the heart of Love and Hope and Fear

Soul-jaundiced, I do loathe Life's upland steep  
And with strange envy muse the dead man's dreamless sleep.

But thou, memorial of monastic gall!

What Fancy sad or lightsome hast thou given?

Thy vision-scaring sounds alone recall

The prayer that trembles on a yawn to heaven;

And this Dean's gape, and that Dean's nosal tone,

And Roman rites retain'd, tho' Roman faith be flown.

Robert Southey

# To The Genius Of Africa

O thou who from the mountain's height  
Roll'st down thy clouds with all their weight  
Of waters to old Niles majestic tide;  
Or o'er the dark sepulchral plain  
Recallest thy Palmyra's ancient pride,  
Amid whose desolated domes  
Secure the savage chacal roams,  
Where from the fragments of the hallow'd fane  
The Arabs rear their miserable homes!

Hear Genius hear thy children's cry!  
Not always should'st thou love to brood  
Stern o'er the desert solitude  
Where seas of sand toss their hot surges high;  
Nor Genius should the midnight song  
Detain thee in some milder mood  
The palmy plains among  
Where Gambia to the torches light  
Flows radiant thro' the awaken'd night.

Ah, linger not to hear the song!  
Genius avenge thy children's wrong!  
The Daemon COMMERCE on your shore  
Pours all the horrors of his train,  
And hark! where from the field of gore  
Howls the hyena o'er the slain!  
Lo! where the flaming village fires the skies!  
Avenging Power awake--arise!

Arise thy children's wrong redress!  
Ah heed the mother's wretchedness  
When in the hot infectious air  
O'er her sick babe she bows opprest--  
Ah hear her when the Christians tear  
The drooping infant from her breast!  
Whelm'd in the waters he shall rest!  
Hear thou the wretched mother's cries,  
Avenging Power awake! arise!

By the rank infected air  
That taints those dungeons of despair,  
By those who there imprison'd die  
Where the black herd promiscuous lie,  
By the scourges blacken'd o'er  
And stiff and hard with human gore,  
By every groan of deep distress  
By every curse of wretchedness,  
By all the train of Crimes that flow  
From the hopelessness of Woe,  
By every drop of blood bespilt,  
By Afric's wrongs and Europe's guilt,  
Awake! arise! avenge!

And thou hast heard! and o'er their blood-fed plains  
Swept thine avenging hurricanes;  
And bade thy storms with whirlwind roar  
Dash their proud navies on the shore;  
And where their armies claim'd the fight  
Wither'd the warrior's might;  
And o'er the unholy host with baneful breath  
There Genius thou hast breath'd the gales of Death.

So perish still the robbers of mankind!  
What tho' from Justice bound and blind  
Inhuman Power has snatch'd the sword!  
What tho' thro' many an ignominious age  
That Fiend with desolating rage  
The tide of carnage pour'd!  
Justice shall yet uncloset her eyes,  
Terrific yet in wrath arise,  
And trample on the tyrant's breast,  
And make Oppression groan opprest.

Robert Southey



# Wat Tyler - Act I

ACT I.

SCENE, A BLACKSMITH'S-SHOP

Wat Tyler at work within. A May-pole  
before the Door.

ALICE, PIERS, &c.

SONG.

CHEERFUL on this holiday,  
Welcome we the merry May.

On ev'ry sunny hillock spread,  
The pale primrose rears her head;  
Rich with sweets the western gale  
Sweeps along the cowslip'd dale.  
Every bank with violets gay,  
Smiles to welcome in the May.

The linnet from the budding grove,  
Chirps her vernal song of love.  
The copse resounds the throstle's notes,  
On each wild gale sweet music floats;  
And melody from every spray,  
Welcomes in the merry May.

Cheerful on this holiday,  
Welcome we the merry May.

[Dance.

During the Dance, Tyler lays down his  
Hammer, and sits mournfully down before  
his Door.

[To him.

HOB CARTER.

Why so sad, neighbour?—do not these gay sports,  
This revelry of youth, recall the days  
When we too mingled in the revelry;  
And lightly tripping in the morris dance  
Welcomed the merry month?

TYLER.

Aye, we were young;  
No cares had quell'd the hey-day of the blood:  
We sported deftly in the April morning,  
Nor mark'd the black clouds gathering o'er our noon;  
Nor fear'd the storm of night.

HOB

Beshrew me, Tyler,  
But my heart joys to see the imps so cheerful!  
Young, hale, and happy, why should they destroy  
These blessings by reflection?

TYLER.

Look ye, neighbour—  
You have known me long.

HOB.

Since we were boys together,  
And play'd at barley-brake, and danc'd the morris:—  
Some five-and-twenty years!

TYLER.

Was not I young,

And hale and happy?

HOB.

Cheerful as the best.

TYLER.

Have not I been a staid, hard-working man?  
Up with the lark at labour—sober—honest—  
Of an unblemish'd character?

HOB.

Who doubts it,  
There's never a man in Essex bears a better.

TYLER.

And shall not these, tho' young, and hale and happy,  
Look on with sorrow to the future hour?  
Shall not reflection poison all their pleasures?  
When I—the honest, staid, hard-working  
Tyler, Toil thro' the long course of the summer's day,  
Still toiling, yet still poor! when with hard labour  
Scarce can I furnish out my daily food—  
And age comes on to steal away my strength,  
And leave me poor and wretched! Why should this be?  
My youth was regular—my labour constant—  
I married an industrious, virtuous woman;  
Nor while I toiled and sweated at the anvil,  
Sat she neglectful of her spinning wheel.—  
Hob—I have only six groats in the world,  
And they must soon by law be taken from me.

HOB

Curse on these taxes—one succeeds another—

Our ministers—panders of a king's will—  
Drain all our wealth away—waste it in revels—  
And lure, or force away our boys, who should be  
The props of our old age!—to fill their armies  
And feed the crows of France! year follows year,  
And still we madly prosecute the war;—  
Draining our wealth—distressing our poor peasants—  
Slaughtering our youths—and all to crown our chiefs  
With Glory!—I detest the hell-sprung name.

TYLER.

What matters me who wears the crown of France?  
Whether a Richard or a Charles possess it?  
They reap the glory—they enjoy the spoil—  
We pay—we bleed!—The sun would shine as cheerly  
The rains of heaven as seasonably fall;  
Tho' neither of these royal pests existed.

HOB.

Nay—as for that, we poor men should fare better!  
No legal robbers then should force away  
The hard-earn'd wages of our honest toil.  
The Parliament for ever cries more money,  
The service of the state demands more money.  
Just heaven! of what service is the state?

TYLER

Oh! 'tis of vast importance! who should pay for  
The luxuries and riots of the court?  
Who should support the flaunting courtier's pride,  
Pay for their midnight revels, their rich garments,  
Did not the state enforce?—Think ye, my friend,  
That I—a humble blacksmith, here at Deptford,  
Would part with these six groats—earn'd by hard toil,  
All that I have! To massacre the Frenchmen,  
Murder as enemies men I never saw!

Did not the state compel me?  
(Tax gatherers pass by)  
There they go, privileg'd r——s!—

(PIERS and ALICE advance to him. )

ALICE.

Did we not dance it well to-day, my father?  
You know I always lov'd these village sports,  
Even from my infancy, and yet methinks  
I never tript along the mead so gaily.  
You know they chose me queen, and your friend Piers  
Wreath'd me this cowslip garland for my head—  
Is it not simple?—you are sad, my father!  
You should have rested from your work to-day,  
And given a few hours up to merriment—  
But you are so serious!

TYLER.

Serious, my good girl!  
I may well be so: when I look at thee  
It makes me sad! thou art too fair a flower  
To bear the wintry wind of poverty!

PIERS.

Yet I have often heard you speak of riches  
Even with contempt: they cannot purchase peace,  
Or innocence; or virtue—sounder sleep  
Waits on the weary plowman's lowly bed,  
Than on the downy couch of luxury  
Lulls the rich slave of pride and indolence.  
I never wish for wealth! My arm is strong,  
And I can purchase by it a coarse meal,  
And hunger savours it.

TYLER.

Young man, thy mind  
Has yet to bear the hard lesson of experience.  
Thou art yet young, the blasting breath of want  
Has not yet froze the current of thy blood.

PIERS.

Fare not the birds well, as from spray to spray  
Blithsome they bound—yet find their simple food  
Scattered abundantly?

TYLER

No fancied boundaries of mine and thine  
Restrain their wanderings: Nature gives enough  
For all; but Man, with arrogant selfishness,  
Proud of his heaps, hoards up superfluous stores  
Robb'd from his weaker fellows, starves the poor,  
Or gives to pity what he owes to justice!

PIERS.

So I have heard our good friend John Ball preach.

ALICE.

My father, wherefore was John Ball imprisoned?  
Was he not charitable, good, and pious?  
I have heard him say that all mankind are brethren,  
And that like brethren they should love each other;—  
Was not that doctrine pious?

TYLER.

Rank sedition—

High treason, every syllable, my child!  
The priests cry out on him for heresy,  
The nobles all detest him as a rebel,  
And this good man, this minister of Christ,  
This man, the friend and brother of mankind,  
Lingers in the dark dungeon!—my dear Alice,  
Retire awhile.

(Exit ALICE.)

Piers, I would speak to thee  
Even with a father's love! you are much with me,  
And I believe do court my conversation;  
Thou could'st not chuse thee forth a truer friend;  
I would fain see thee happy, but I fear  
Thy very virtues will destroy thy peace.  
My daughter—she is young—not yet fifteen—  
Piers, thou art generous, and thy youthful heart  
Warm with affection; this close intimacy  
Will ere long grow to love.

PIERS.

Suppose it so;  
Were that an evil, Walter? She is mild  
And cheerful, and industrious—now methinks  
With such a partner life would be most happy!  
Why would you warn me then of wretchedness?  
Is there an evil that can harm our lot?  
I have been told the virtuous must be happy,  
And have believed it true; tell me, my friend,  
What shall disturb the virtuous?

TYLER

Poverty—  
A bitter foe?

PIERS.

Nay, you have often told me  
That happiness does not consist in riches.

TYLER.

It is most true: but tell me, my dear boy,  
Could'st thou be happy to behold thy wife  
Pining with want?—the children of your loves  
Clad in the squalid rags of wretchedness?  
And when thy hard and unremitting toil  
Had earn'd with pain a scanty recompense,  
Could'st thou be patient when the law should rob thee,  
And leave thee without bread and pennyles?

PIERS

It is a dreadful picture.

TYLER.

'Tis a true one.

PIERS.

But yet methinks our sober industry  
Might drive away the danger, 'tis but little  
That I could wish—food for our frugal meals,  
Raiment, however homely, and a bed  
To shield us from the night.

TYLER.

Thy honest reason  
Could wish no more: but were it not most wretched  
To want the coarse food for the frugal meal?  
And by the orders of your merciless lord,



If you by chance were guilty of being poor,  
To be turned out adrift to the bleak world,  
Unhoused, unfriended?—Piers, I have not been idle,  
I never ate the bread of indolence—  
Could Alice be more thrifty than her mother?  
Yet but with one child, and that one, how good  
Thou knowest, I scarcely can provide the wants  
Of nature: look at these wolves of the law,  
They come to drain me of my hard earn'd wages.  
I have already paid the heavy tax  
Laid on the wool that clothes me—on my leather,  
On all the needful articles of life!  
And now three groats (and I work'd hard to earn them)  
The Parliament demands—and I must pay them,  
Forsooth, for liberty to wear my head.—

Enter Tax-gatherers.

COLLECTOR.

Three groats a head for all your family.

PIERS.

Why is this money gathered?—'tis a hard tax  
On the poor labourer!—It can never be  
That government should thus distress the people.  
Go to the rich for money—honest labour  
Ought to enjoy its fruits.

COLLECTOR.

The state wants money.  
War is expensive—'tis a glorious war,  
A war of honour, and must be supported.—  
Three groats a head.

TYLER.

There, three for my own head,  
Three for my wife's!—what will the state tax next?

COLLECTOR.

You have a daughter.

TYLER.

She is below the age—not yet fifteen.

COLLECTOR.

You would evade the tax.—

TYLER.

Sir Officer,  
I have paid you fairly what the law demands.

(Alice and her Mother enter the Shop. The Tax-gathers go to her. One of them  
lays hold of her. She screams. TYLER goes in.)

COLLECTOR.

You say she's under age.

(ALICE screams again. TYLER knocks out the Tax-gatherer's Brains. His  
Companions fly.

PIERS.

A just revenge.

TYLER.

Most just indeed; but in the eye of the law  
'Tis murder—and the murderer's lot is mine.

(PIERS goes out.)

(TYLER sits down mournfully. )

ALICE.

Fly, my dear father! let us leave this place  
Before they raise pursuit.

TYLER.

Nay, nay, my child,  
Flight would be useless—I have done my duty;  
I have punish'd the brute insolence of lust,  
And here will wait my doom.

WIFE.

Oh let us fly!  
My husband, my dear husband!

ALICE.

Quit but this place,  
And we may yet be safe, and happy too.

TYLER.

It would be useless, Alice—'twould but lengthen

A wretched life in fear.

(Cry without. )

Liberty! liberty!

(Enter Mob , HOB CARTER, &c.)

(Cry ) Liberty! liberty!— No Poll tax!— No War!

HOB.

We have broke our chains—we will arise in anger—  
The mighty multitude shall trample down  
The handful that oppress them.

TYLER

Have ye heard  
So soon then of my murder?

HOB

Of your vengeance.  
Piers ran throughout the village—told the news—  
Cried out, to arms!—arm, arm for Liberty!  
For Liberty and Justice!

TYLER

My good friends,  
Heed well your danger, or be resolute;  
Learn to laugh menaces and force to scorn,  
Or leave me. I dare answer the bold deed—  
Death must come once; return you to your homes,  
Protect my wife and child, and on my grave  
Write why I died; perhaps the time may come,

When honest Justice shall applaud the deed.

HOB

Nay, nay,—we are oppressed, and have too long  
Knelt at our proud lords' feet—we have too long  
Obey'd their orders—bow'd to their caprices—  
Sweated for them the wearying summer's day,  
Wasted for them the wages of our toil;  
Fought for them, conquer'd for them, bled for them  
Still to be trampled on and still despis'd;  
But we have broke our chains.

TOM MILLER.

Piers is gone on  
Thro' all the neighbouring villages, to spread  
The glorious tidings.

HOB

He is hurried on  
To Maidstone, to deliver good John Ball,  
Our friend, our shepherd.

(Mob increases.)

TYLER

Friends and Countrymen,  
Will ye then rise to save an honest man  
From the fierce clutches of the bloody law?  
Oh do not call to mind my private wrongs,  
That the state drain'd my hard-earned pittance from me;  
That, of his office proud, the foul Collector  
Durst with lewd hand seize on my darling child,  
Insult her maiden modesty, and force  
A father's hand to vengeance; heed not this:

Think not, my countrymen, on private wrongs,  
Remember what yourselves have long endured.  
Think of the insults, wrongs, and contumelies,  
Ye bear from your proud lords—that your hard toil  
Manures their fertile fields—you plow the earth,  
You sow the corn, you reap the ripen'd harvest,—  
They riot on the produce!—That, like beasts,  
They sell you with their land—claim all the fruits  
Which the kindly earth produces as their own.  
The privilege, forsooth, of noble birth!  
On, on to Freedom; feel but your own strength,  
Be but resolved, and these destructive tyrants  
Shall shrink before your vengeance.

HOB

On to London—  
The tidings fly before us—the court trembles—  
Liberty!—Vengeance!—Justice!

END OF THE FIRST ACT

Robert Southey

# Wat Tyler - Act II

ACT II.

SCENE— BLACKHEATH.

TYLER, HOB, &c.

SONG.

' When Adam delv'd, and Eve span,  
' Who was then the gentleman?'

Wretched is the infant's lot,  
Born within the straw-roof'd cot!  
Be he generous, wise, or brave,  
He must only be a slave.  
Long, long labour, little rest,  
Still to toil to be oppress'd;  
Drain'd by taxes of his store,  
Punish'd next for being poor;  
This is the poor wretch's lot,  
Born within the straw-roof'd cot.

While the peasant works— to sleep;  
What the peasant sows— to reap;  
On the couch of ease to lie,  
Rioting in revelry;  
Be he villain, be he fool,  
Still to hold despotic rule,  
Trampling on his slaves with scorn;  
This is to be nobly born.

' When Adam delv'd, and Eve span,  
' Who was then the gentleman?'

JACK STRAW.

The mob are up in London— the proud courtiers

Begin to tremble.

TOM MILLER.

Aye, aye, 'tis time to tremble;  
Who'll plow their fields, who'll do their drudgery now?  
And work like horses, to give them the harvest?

JACK STRAW.

I only wonder we lay quiet so long.  
We had always the same strength, and we deserved  
The ills we met with for not using it.

HOB.

Why do we fear those animals called lords?  
What is there in the name to frighten us?  
Is not my arm as mighty as a Baron's?

Enter PIERS and JOHN BALL.

PIERS (to TYLER).

Have I done well, my father?— I remember'd  
This good man lay in prison.

TYLER.

My dear child,  
Most well; the people rise for liberty,  
And their first deed should be to break the chains  
That bind the virtuous:— O thou honest priest—  
How much has thou endured!

JOHN BALL.



Why aye, my friend!  
These squalid rags bespeak what I have suffered.  
I was revil'd— insulted— left to languish  
In a damp dungeon; but I bore it cheerily—  
My heart was glad— for I have done my duty.  
I pitied my oppressors, and I sorrowed  
For the poor men of England.

TYLER.

They have felt  
Their strength—look round this heath! 'tis thronged with men.  
Ardent for freedom; mighty is the event  
That waits their fortune.

JOHN BALL.

I would fain address them.

TYLER.

Do so, my friend, and teach to them their duty;  
Remind them of their long withholden rights.  
What ho there! silence!

PIERS.

Silence there, my friends,  
This good man would address you.

HOB.

Aye, aye, hear him—  
He is no mealy mouthed court orator,  
To flatter vice, and pamper lordly pride.

JOHN BALL.

Friends! Brethren! for ye are my brethren all;  
Englishmen met in arms to advocate  
The cause of freedom! hear me! pause awhile  
In the career of vengeance; it is true  
I am a priest; but, as these rags may speak,  
Not one who riots in the poor man's spoil,  
Or trades with his religion. I am one  
Who preach the law of Christ, and in my life,  
Would practice what he taught. The son of God  
Came not to you in power: humble in mien,  
Lowly in heart, the man of Nazareth  
Preach'd mercy, justice, love: 'Woe unto ye,  
Ye that are rich:—if that ye would be saved,  
Sell that ye have, and give unto the poor.'  
So taught the Saviour: oh, my honest friends!  
Have ye not felt the strong indignant throb  
Of justice in your bosoms, to behold  
The lordly Baron feasting on your spoils?  
Have you not in your hearts arraign'd the lot  
That gave him on the couch of luxury  
To pillow his head, and pass the festive day  
In sportive feasts, and ease, and revelry?  
Have you not often in your conscience ask'd  
Why is the difference, wherefore should that man,  
No worthier than myself, thus lord it over me,  
And bid me labour, and enjoy the fruits?  
The God within your breasts has argued thus!  
The voice of truth has murmur'd; came ye not  
As helpless to the world? Shines not the sun  
With equal ray on both?— Do ye not feel  
The self same winds of heaven as keenly parch ye?  
Abundant is the earth—the Sire of all,  
Saw and pronounc'd that it was very good.  
Look round: the vernal fields smile with new flowers,  
The budding orchard perfumes the soft breeze,  
And the green corn waves to the passing gale.  
There is enough for all, but your proud Baron  
Stands up, and arrogant of strength exclaims,  
'I am a Lord—by nature I am noble:

These fields are mine, for I was born to them,  
I was born in the castle—you, poor wretches,  
Whelp'd in the cottage, are by birth my slaves.'  
Almighty God! such blasphemies are utter'd!  
Almighty God! such blasphemies believ'd!

TOM MILLER.

This is something like a sermon.

JACK STRAW.

Where's the bishop  
Would tell you truths like these?

HOB.

There was never a bishop among all the apostles.

JOHN BALL.

My brethren!

PIERS.

Silence, the good priest speaks.

JOHN BALL.

My brethren, these are truths, and weighty ones:  
Ye are all equal: nature made ye so.  
Equality is your birth-right;—when I gaze  
On the proud palace, and behold one man  
In the blood-purpled robes of royalty,  
Feasting at ease, and lording over millions,  
Then turn me to the hut of poverty,

And see the wretched lab'rer worn with toil,  
Divide his scanty morsel with his infants,  
I sicken, and indignant at the sight,  
' Blush for the patience of humanity.'

JACK STRAW.

We will assert our rights.

TOM MILLER.

We'll trample down  
These insolent oppressors.

JOHN BALL.

In good truth  
Ye have cause for anger: but, my honest friends,  
Is it revenge or justice that ye seek?

MOB.

Justice, justice!

JOHN BALL.

Oh then remember mercy;  
And though your proud oppressors spar'd not you,  
Shew you excel them in humanity.  
They will use every art to disunite you,  
To conquer separately, by stratagem,  
Whom in a mass they fear— but be ye firm—  
Boldly demand your long-forgotten rights,  
Your sacred, your inalienable freedom—  
Be bold—be resolute—be merciful!  
And while you spurn the hated name of slaves,  
Shew you are men!

MOB.

Long live our honest priest!

JACK STRAW.

He shall be made archbishop.

JOHN BALL.

My brethren, I am plain John Ball, your friend,  
Your equal: by the law of Christ enjoined  
To serve you, not command.

JACK STRAW.

March we for London.

TYLER.

Mark me, my friends—we rise for liberty—  
Justice shall be our guide: let no man dare  
To plunder in the tumult.

MOB

Lead us on—  
Liberty!—Justice!

(Exeunt, with cries of Liberty— no Poll Tax — no War.)

SCENE CHANGES TO THE TOWER.

KING RICHARD, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN,  
WALWORTH, PHILPOT.

KING

What must we do? the danger grows more imminent—  
The mob increases—

PHILPOT.

Every moment brings  
Fresh tidings of our peril.

KING.

It were well  
To yield them what they ask.

ARCHBISHOP.

Aye, that my liege  
Were politic. Go boldly forth to meet them,  
Grant all they ask—however wild and ruinous—  
Mean time the troops you have already summoned,  
Will gather round them. Then my Christian power  
Absolves you of your promise.

WALWORTH.

Were but their ringleaders cut off—the rabble  
Would soon disperse.

PHILPOT.

United in a mass  
There's nothing can resist them—once divide them,

And they will fall an easy sacrifice.

ARCHBISHOP.

Lull them by promises—bespeak them fair—  
Go forth, my liege—spare not, if need requires,  
A solemn oath, to ratify the treaty.

KING

I dread their fury.

ARCHBISHOP.

'Tis a needless dread,  
There is divinity about your person;  
It is the sacred privilege of Kings,  
Howe'er they act, to render no account  
To man. The people have been taught this lesson,  
Nor can they soon forget it.

KING.

I will go—  
I will submit to everything they ask;  
My day of triumph will arrive at last.

(Shouts without.)

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

The mob are at the city gates.

ARCHBISHOP.

Haste, haste,  
Address them ere too late. I'll remain here,  
For they detest me much.

(Shouts again. )

Enter another Messenger.

MESSENGER.

The Londoners have opened the city gates,  
The rebels are admitted.

KING.

Fear then must give me courage; my Lord Mayor,  
Come you with me.

(Exeunt. Shouts without.)

SCENE— SMITHFIELD.

WAT TYLER, JOHN BALL, PIERS, &c. Mob.

PIERS.

So far triumphant are we: how these nobles,  
These petty tyrants, who so long oppress'd us,  
Shrink at the first resistance!

HOB.

They were powerful  
Only because we fondly thought them so.



Where is Jack Straw?

TYLER.

Jack Straw is gone to the tower  
To seize the king, and so to end resistance.

JOHN BALL.

It was well judg'd: fain would I spare the shedding  
Of human blood: gain we that royal puppet,  
And all will follow fairly: depriv'd of him,  
The nobles lose their pretext, nor will dare  
Rebel against the people's majesty.

Enter Herald.

HERALD.

Richard the Second, by the grace of God,  
Of England, Ireland, France, and Scotland, King,  
And of the town of Berwick upon Tweed,  
Would parley with Wat Tyler.

TYLER.

Let him know  
Wat Tyler is in Smithfield.

(Exit Herald.)

I will parley  
With this young monarch; as he comes to me  
Trusting my honour, on your lives I charge you  
Let none attempt to harm him.

JOHN BALL

The faith of courts  
Is but a weak dependence! You are honest—  
And better is it even to die the victim  
Of credulous honesty, than live preserved  
By the cold policy that still suspects.

Enter KING, WALWORTH, PHILPOT, &c.

KING.

I would speak to thee, Wat Tyler: bid the mob  
Retire awhile.

PIERS.

Nay, do not go alone—  
Let me attend you.

TYLER.

Wherefore should I fear?  
Am I not arm'd with a just cause?—retire,  
And I will boldly plead the cause of Freedom.

(Advances.)

KING.

Tyler, why have you kill'd my officer?  
And led my honest subjects from their homes,  
Thus to rebel against the Lord's anointed?

TYLER.

Because they were oppress'd.

KING.

Was this the way  
To remedy the ill?— you should have tried  
By milder means—petition'd at the throne—  
The throne will always listen to petitions.

TYLER.

King of England,  
Petitioning for pity is most weak,  
The sovereign people ought to demand justice.  
I kill'd your officer, for his lewd hand  
Insulted a maid's modesty: your subjects  
I lead to rebel against the Lord's anointed,  
Because his ministers have made him odious:  
His yoke is heavy, and his burden grievous.  
Why do we carry on this fatal war,  
To force upon the French a king they hate;  
Tearing our young men from their peaceful homes;  
Forcing his hard-earn'd fruits from the honest peasant;  
Distressing us to desolate our neighbours?  
Why is this ruinous poll tax imposed,  
But to support your court's extravagance,  
And your mad title to the crown of France?  
Shall we sit tamely down beneath these evils  
Petitioning for pity?  
King of England!  
Why are we sold like cattle in your markets—  
Deprived of every privilege of man?  
Must we lie tamely at our tyrant's feet,  
And, like your spaniels, lick the hand that beats us?  
You sit at ease in your gay palaces,  
The costly banquet courts your appetite,  
Sweet music soothes your slumbers; we the while,  
Scarce by hard toil can earn a little food,  
And sleep scarce shelter'd from the cold night wind:

Whilst your wild projects wrest the little from us  
Which might have cheer'd the wintry hour of age:  
The Parliament for ever asks more money:  
We toil and sweat for money for your taxes:  
Where is the benefit, what food reap we  
From all the councils of your government?  
Think you that we should quarrel with the French?  
What boots to us your victories, your glory?  
We pay, we fight, you profit at your ease.  
Do you not claim the country as your own?  
Do you not call the venison of the forest,  
The birds of heaven your own?—prohibiting us,  
Even tho' in want of food, to seize the prey  
Which nature offers?—King! is all this just?  
Think you we do not feel the wrongs we suffer?  
The hour of retribution is at hand,  
And tyrants tremble—mark me, King of England.

WALWORTH.

(Comes behind him, and stabs him.)

Insolent rebel, threatening the King!

PIERS.

Vengeance! vengeance!

HOB.

Seize the King.

KING.

I must be bold. (Advancing.)  
My friends and loving subjects,  
I will grant all you ask: you shall be free—  
The tax shall be repeal'd— all, all you wish.

Your leader menaced me, he deserv'd his fate.  
Quiet your angers; on my royal word  
Your grievances shall all be done away.  
Your vassalage abolish'd.—A free pardon  
Allow'd to all: so help me God it shall be.

JOHN BALL.

Revenge, my brethren, beseems not Christians.  
Send us these terms sign'd with your seal of state.  
We will await in peace: deceive us not.—  
Act justly, so to excuse your late foul deed.

KING.

The charter shall be drawn out: on mine honour,  
All shall be justly done.

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

Robert Southey

# Wat Tyler - Act Iii

ACT III.

SCENE—SMITHFIELD.

PIERS (meeting JOHN BALL.)

You look disturb'd, my father?

JOHN BALL.

Piers, I am so.

Jack Straw has forced the Tower: seized the Archbishop,  
And beheaded him.

PIERS.

The curse of insurrection!

JOHN BALL.

Aye, Piers! our nobles level down their vassals—  
Keep them at endless labour like their brutes,  
Degrading every faculty by servitude:  
Repressing all the energy of the mind.  
We must not wonder then, that like wild beasts,  
When they have burst their chains, with brutal rage  
They revenge them on their tyrants.

PIERS.

This Archbishop!  
He was oppressive to his humble vassals:  
Proud, haughty, avaricious.—

JOHN BALL.

A true high-priest!  
Preaching humility with his mitre on!  
Praising up alms and Christian charity  
Even whilst his unforgiving hand distress'd  
His honest tenants.

PIERS.

He deserv'd his fate then.

JOHN BALL.

Justice can never link with cruelty.  
Is there among the catalogue of crimes  
A sin so black that only Death can expiate?  
Will Reason never rouse her from her slumbers,  
And darting thro' the veil her eagle eye,  
See in the sable garment of the law  
Revenge conceal'd? —This high priest has been haughty—  
He has oppress'd his vassals: tell me, Piers,  
Does his Death remedy the ills he caused?  
Were it not better to repress his power  
Of doing wrong—that so his future life  
Might expiate the evils of the past,  
And benefit mankind?

PIERS.

But must not vice  
Be punished?

JOHN BALL.

Is not punishment revenge?

The momentary violence of anger  
May be excus'd: the indignant heart will throb  
Against oppression, and the outstretch'd arm  
Resent its injured feelings: the Collector  
Insulted Alice, and roused the keen emotions  
Of a fond father. Tyler murder'd him.

PIERS.

Murder'd!—a most harsh word.

JOHN BALL.

Yes, murder'd him:  
His mangled feelings prompted the bad act,  
And Nature will almost commend the deed  
That Justice blames: but will the awaken'd feelings  
Plead with their heart-moving eloquence  
For the cool deliberate murder of Revenge?  
Would you, Piers, in your calmer hour of reason  
Condemn an erring brother to be slain?  
Cut him at once from all the joys of life,  
All hopes of reformation! to revenge  
The deed his punishment cannot recall?  
My blood boil'd in me at the fate of Tyler,  
Yet I revenged not.

PIERS.

Oh my Christian father!  
They would not argue thus humanely on us,  
Were we within their power.

JOHN BALL.

I know they would not!  
But we must pity them that they are vicious,  
Not imitate their vice.



PIERS.

Alas, poor Tyler!  
I do repent me much that I stood back,  
When he advanced fearless in rectitude  
To meet these royal assassins.

JOHN BALL.

Not for myself,  
Tho' I have lost an honest virtuous friend,  
Mourn I the death of Tyler: he was one  
Gifted with the strong energy of mind,  
Quick to perceive the right, and prompt to act  
When Justice needed: he would listen to me  
With due attention, yet not yielding lightly  
What had to him seem'd good; severe in virtue  
He awed the ruder people whom he led  
By his stern rectitude.

PIERS.

Witness that day  
When they destroy'd the palace of the Gaunt;  
And hurl'd the wealth his avarice had amass'd,  
Amid the fire: the people, fierce in zeal,  
Threw in the flames the wretch whose selfish hand  
Purloin'd amid the tumult.

JOHN BALL.

I lament  
The death of Tyler, for my country's sake.  
I shudder lest posterity enslav'd  
Should rue his murder!—who shall now control  
The giddy multitude, blind to their own good,  
And listening with avidity to the tale  
Of courtly falsehood!

PIERS.

The King must perform  
His plighted promise.

(Cry without) —The Charter!—the Charter!

(Enter Mob and Herald.)

TOM MILLER.

Read it out—read it out.

HOB.

Aye, aye, let's hear the Charter.

HERALD.

Richard Plantagenet, by the grace of God,  
King of England, Ireland, France, Scotland,  
and the town of Berwick upon Tweed, to all  
whom it may concern, These presents,  
Whereas our loving subjects have complained  
to us of the heavy burdens they endure,  
particularly from our late enacted  
poll-tax; and whereas they have risen in  
arms against our officers, and demanded the  
abolition of personal slavery, vassalage, and  
manorial rights; we, ever ready in our sovereign  
mercy to listen to the petitions of our  
loving subjects, do annul all these grievances.

MOB.

Huzza! long live the king!

HERALD.

And do of our royal mercy, grant a free  
pardon to all who may have been anyways  
concerned in the late insurrections. All this  
shall be faithfully performed on our royal  
word. So help us God.  
God save the King.

(Loud and repeated shouts.)

HERALD.

Now then depart in quiet to your homes.

JOHN BALL.

Nay, my good friend—the people will remain  
Embodied peaceably, till Parliament  
Confirm the royal charter: tell your king so:  
We will await the Charter's confirmation,  
Meanwhile comporting ourselves orderly  
As peaceful citizens, not risen in tumult,  
But to redress their evils.

Exit Herald, &c. HOB, PIERS, and  
JOHN BALL, remain.

HOB.

'Twas well order'd.  
I place but little trust in courtly faith.

JOHN BALL.

We must remain embodied; else the king  
Will plunge again in royal luxury;  
And when the storm of danger is past over,  
Forget his promises.

HOB.

Aye, like an agoish sinner,  
He'll promise to repent when the fit's on him,  
When well recover'd, laugh at his own terrors.

PIERS.

Oh ! I am grieved that we must gain so little!  
Why are not all these empty ranks abolish'd;  
King, slave, and lord, 'ennobl'd into MAN?'  
Are we not equal all?—have you not told me  
Equality is the sacred right of man,  
Inalienable, tho' by force withheld?

JOHN BALL.

Even so: but Piers, my frail and fallible judgment  
Knows hardly to decide if it be right,  
Peaceably to return; content with little,  
With this half restitution of our rights,  
Or boldly to proceed through blood and slaughter,  
Till we should all be equal and all happy.  
I chose the milder way:—perhaps I erred.

PIERS.

I fear me—by the mass, the unsteady people  
Are flocking homewards! how the multitude  
Diminishes!

JOHN BALL.

Go thou, my son, and stay them.  
Carter, do you exert your influence.  
All depends on their stay: my mind is troubl'd,  
And I would fain compose my thoughts for action.

(Exeunt HOB and PIERS.)

Father of mercies! I do fear me much  
That I have err'd: thou gav'st my ardent mind  
To pierce the mists of superstitious falsehood;—  
Gav'st me to know the truth. I should have urg'd it  
Thro' every op, perhaps,  
The seemly voice of pity has deceiv'd me,  
And all this mighty movement ends in ruin!  
I fear me, I have been like the weak leech,  
Who, sparing to cut deep, with cruel mercy  
Mangles his patient without curing him.

(Great tumult.)

What means this tumult? hark! the clang of arms!  
God of eternal justice! the false monarch  
Has broke his plighted vow!

Enter PIERS, wounded.

PIERS.

Fly, fly, my father—the perjur'd king—fly! fly!

JOHN BALL.

Nay, nay, my child—I dare abide my fate,  
Let me bind up thy wounds.

PIERS.

'Tis useless succour,  
They seek thy life; fly, fly, my honour'd father.  
Fain would I die in peace to hope thee safe.  
I shall soon join thee, Tyler!—they are murdering  
Our unsuspecting brethren: half unarm'd,  
Trusting too fondly to the tyrant's vows,  
They were dispersing:—the streets swim with blood.  
O! save thyself.

Enter Soldiers.

SOLDIER.

This is that old seditious heretic.

(Seizes JOHN BALL.)

SECOND SOLDIER.

And here the young spawn of rebellion;  
My orders ar'n't to spare him.

(Stabs PIERS.)

Come, you old stirrer-up of insurrection,  
You bell-wether of the mob—you ar'n't to die  
So easily.

(They lead off JOHN BALL—the tumult  
increases—Mob fly across the Stage—  
the Troops pursue them—loud cries and  
shouts.)

SCENE—WESTMINSTER HALL.

KING, WALWORTH, PHILPOT, SIR JOHN TRESILIAN, &c.

WALWORTH.

My liege, 'twas wisely order'd to destroy  
The dunghill rabble, but take prisoner  
That old seditious priest: his strange wild notions  
Of this equality, when well exposed,  
Will create ridicule, and shame the people  
Of their late tumults.

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN.

Aye, there's nothing like  
A fair free open trial, where the king  
Can chuse his jury and appoint his judges.

KING.

Walworth, I must thank you for my deliverance;  
'Twas a bold deed to stab him in the parley!  
Kneel down, and rise a knight, Sir William Walworth.

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

I left them hotly at it. Smithfield smoked  
With the rebels' blood: your troops fought loyally,  
There's not a man of them will lend an ear  
To pity.

SIR WILLIAM WALWORTH.

Is John Ball secur'd?

MESSENGER.

They have seiz'd him.

Enter Guards with JOHN BALL.

GUARD.

We've brought the old villain.

SECOND GUARD.

An old mischief-maker—  
Why there's fifteen hundred of the mob are kill'd,  
All thro' his preaching!

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN.

Prisoner! are you the arch-rebel, John Ball?

JOHN BALL.

I am John Ball; but I am not a rebel.  
Take ye the name, who, arrogant in strength,  
Rebel against the people's sovereignty.

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN.

John Ball, you are accus'd of stirring up  
The poor deluded people to rebellion;  
Not having the fear of God and of the king  
Before your eyes; of preaching up strange notions



Heretical and treasonous; such as saying  
That kings have not a right from heaven to govern;  
That all mankind are equal; and that ranks  
And the distinctions of society,  
Aye, and the sacred rights of property  
Are evil and oppressive:—plead you guilty  
To this most heavy charge?

JOHN BALL.

If it be guilt—  
To preach what you are pleas'd to call strange notions.  
That all mankind as brethren must be equal;  
That privileg'd orders of society  
Are evil and oppressive; that the right  
Of property is a juggle to deceive  
The poor whom you oppress;—I plead me guilty.

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN.

It is against the custom of this court  
That the prisoner should plead guilty.

JOHN BALL.

Why then put you  
The needless question?—Sir Judge, let me save  
The vain and empty insult of a trial.  
What I have done, that I dare justify.

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN.

Did you not tell the mob they were oppress'd,  
And preach upon the equality of man;  
With evil intent thereby to stir them up  
To tumult and rebellion?

JOHN BALL.

That I told them  
That all mankind are equal, is most true:  
Ye came as helpless infants to the world:  
Ye feel alike the infirmities of nature;  
And at last moulder into common clay.  
Why then these vain distinctions!—bears not the earth  
Food in abundance?—must your granaries  
O'erflow with plenty, while the poor man starves?  
Sir Judge, why sit you there clad in your furs?  
Why are your cellars stor'd with choicest wines?  
Your larders hung with dainties, while your vassal,  
As virtuous, and as able too by nature,  
Tho' by your selfish tyranny depriv'd  
Of mind's improvement, shivers in his rags,  
And starves amid the plenty he creates.  
I have said this is wrong, and I repeat it—  
And there will be a time when this great truth  
Shall be confess'd—be felt by all mankind.  
The electric truth shall run from man to man,  
And the blood-cemented pyramid of greatness  
Shall fall before the flash!

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN

Audacious rebel!  
How darest thou insult this sacred court,  
Blaspheming all the dignities of rank?  
How could the Government be carried on  
Without the sacred orders of the king,  
And the nobility?

JOHN BALL.

Tell me, Sir Judge,  
What does the government avail the peasant?  
Would not he plow his field and sow the corn,  
Aye, and in peace enjoy the harvest too:  
Would not the sunshine and the dews descend,

Tho' neither King nor Parliament existed?  
Do your Court Politics ought matter him?  
Would he be warring even unto the death  
With his French neighbours?—Charles and  
Richard contend;  
The people fight and suffer:—think ye, Sirs,  
If neither country had been cursed with a chief,  
The peasants would have quarrell'd?

KING.

This is treason!  
The patience of the court has been insulted—  
Condemn the foul mouth'd, contumacious rebel.

SIR JOHN TRESILIAN.

John Ball, whereas you are accused before us  
Of stirring up the people to rebellion,  
And preaching to them strange and dangerous doctrines;  
And whereas your behavior to the court  
Has been most insolent and contumacious;  
Insulting Majesty—and since you have pleaded  
Guilty to all these charges; I condemn you  
To death: you shall be hanged by the neck,  
But not till you are dead—your bowels opened—  
Your heart torn out and burnt before your face—  
Your traitorous head be sever'd from your body—  
Your body quartered, and exposed upon  
The city gates—a terrible example—  
And the Lord God have mercy on your soul!

JOHN BALL.

Why be it so. I can smile at your vengeance,  
For I am arm'd with rectitude of soul.  
The truth, which all my life I have divulg'd  
And am now doom'd in torment to expire for,  
Shall still survive—the destin'd hour must come,

When it shall blaze with sun-surpassing splendor,  
And the dark mists of prejudice and falsehood  
Fade in its strong effulgence. Flattery's incense  
No more shall shadow round the gore-dyed throne;  
That altar of oppression, fed with rites,  
More savage than the Priests of Moloch taught,  
Shall be consumed amid the fire of Justice;  
The ray of truth shall emanate around,  
And the whole world be lighted!

KING.

Drag him hence—  
Away with him to death! order the troops  
Now to give quarter and make prisoners—  
Let the blood-reeking sword of war be sheathed,  
That the law may take vengeance on the rebels.

THE END.

Robert Southey

# Winter

A wrinkled crabbed man they picture thee,  
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as grey  
As the long moss upon the apple-tree;  
Blue-lipt, an icedrop at thy sharp blue nose,  
Close muffled up, and on thy dreary way  
Plodding alone through sleet and drifting snows.  
They should have drawn thee by the high-heapt hearth,  
Old Winter! seated in thy great armed chair,  
Watching the children at their Christmas mirth;  
Or circled by them as thy lips declare  
Some merry jest, or tale of murder dire,  
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night,  
Pausing at times to rouse the mouldering fire,  
Or taste the old October brown and bright.

Robert Southey

## Written On Sunday Morning

Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!  
I to the Woodlands wend, and there  
In lovely Nature see the GOD OF LOVE.  
The swelling organ's peal  
Wakes not my soul to zeal,  
Like the wild music of the wind-swept grove.  
The gorgeous altar and the mystic vest  
Rouse not such ardor in my breast,  
As where the noon-tide beam  
Flash'd from the broken stream,  
Quick vibrates on the dazzled sight;  
Or where the cloud-suspended rain  
Sweeps in shadows o'er the plain;  
Or when reclining on the cliff's huge height  
I mark the billows burst in silver light.

Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!  
I to the Woodlands shall repair,  
Feed with all Natures charms mine eyes,  
And hear all Natures melodies.  
The primrose bank shall there dispense  
Faint fragrance to the awaken'd sense,  
The morning beams that life and joy impart  
Shall with their influence warm my heart.  
And the full tear that down my cheek will steal,  
Shall speak the prayer of praise I feel!

Go thou and seek the House of Prayer!  
I to the woodlands bend my way  
And meet RELIGION there.  
She needs not haunt the high-arch'd dome to pray  
Where storied windows dim the doubtful day:  
With LIBERTY she loves to rove.  
Wide o'er the heathy hill or cowslip'd dale;  
Or seek the shelter of the embowering grove,  
Sweet are these scenes to her, and when the night  
Pours in the north her silver streams of light,  
She woos Reflexion in the silent gloom,  
And ponders on the world to come.

Robert Southey