Lyrical Ballads 1798
William Wordsworth

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
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This book is the product of collaboration between myself and the students of Literary Editing (English 441/641) during eight of the sixteen weeks of fall semester 2011 at Clemson University. Like any critical edition, it engages with and acknowledges a number of precursor texts, the most evident being the four editions of *Lyrical Ballads* that mark the success of the once experimental verse that the poets ventured to publish, at first anonymously, in 1798, as well as the commemorative facsimiles published by David Nutt (London) and edited by prolific scholar, editor and poet Edward Dowden (1843-1913). See my introduction to *Edward Dowden: A Critical Edition of the Complete Poetry*, a Special Online Number of *The South Carolina Review* (Summer 2010) also available on CUDP’s Bibliographic Studies webpage. The base text chosen for the present volume is the Dowden 3rd edition of 1898, which is to say, with a few rare exceptions noted, that of the 1798 London edition, which Dowden and Nutt originally set out to emulate “page for page and line for line . . . in old-faced type closely resembling that of the original,” even so far as deliberately incorporating the textual errors and poet’s errata at the end of the 1798 edition. We have followed suit but note those corrections (not always introduced in Wordsworth’s 1800, 1802, and 1805 editions) in the apparatus rather than in an errata page. Dowden’s endnotes have become footnotes and his preface serves as our introduction to the poems.

One of the peculiarities of Dowden’s facsimile edition of 1890 is that the preliminary pages embedded the preliminary elements of the J. & A. Arch title page, the poets’ “Advertisement” (famously expanded in Wordsworth’s Prefaces of 1800 and 1802), and the Contents page of 1798 so that two sets of roman numerals were used, one printed in the head space over Dowden’s Preface and the other over the “Advertisement.” This problem remained in Dowden’s 2nd edition (1891), which abandoned the “old-faced type” but otherwise remained faithful to the 1798 layout, including the replication of duplicate spreads for pp. 70-71, one not numbered and thus unnoticed and the other numbered. The layout issue in the preliminaries was rectified in Dowden’s 3rd edition by moving the simulated title page and “Advertisement” to the end of the book, a precedent observed here, in the Appendix of *Lyrical Ballads 1798: A Critical Edition*.

Thomas Hutchinson’s 1898 Duckworth edition of *Lyrical Ballads* acknowledges that Dowden’s edition of 1890 was the “First Reprint of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798 . . . (8vo. Half-bound in parchment: paper sides) . . . [a] beautiful book” that yielded a large-paper edition of 60 copies.” After giving a bibliographic collation of the Contents of Dowden’s first edition, Hutchinson exceeds Dowden in his endnotes and with “certain [additional] poems of 1798, anticipating the scholarship of R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones in their Methuen edition of 1963 and that of W. J. B. Owen (OUP, 1967; see Abbreviations, below). The successor to these is the mammoth tome in the Cornell Wordsworth series, edited by James Butler and Karen Green (1992), compared with which our humble edition will primarily facilitate instruction at the undergraduate level in computer “smart” classrooms. As a supplement, though mainly for instruction on handling variants, the digital scans of 1798, 1800, 1802, and 1805 editions of *Lyrical Ballads* on Romantic Circles’ “Electronic Editions” website is highly recommended, particularly the feature called “Dynamic Collation.”
Introduction

by Edward Dowden

This edition of Lyrical Ballads follows in its text the first edition of the original, published in 1798. It does not attempt to imitate the type used in that edition. Much care has been taken to ensure accuracy, yet perhaps it would be rash to assert that absolute freedom from error has been attained. [Errors introduced in 1798 and noted in an errata at the end of that book are left standing in the base text of this edition and corrected in its critical apparatus.—WKC]

In some copies, instead of the words on the title-page, “London: Printed for J. & A. Arch, Gracechurch Street,” the following imprint is found: “Bristol: Printed by Biggs & Cottle, for T. N. Longman, Paternoster Row, London. 1798.” It is right to remember that this remarkable volume of Poems is a Bristol book. The sale was so slow that Cottle parted with the larger number of the five hundred copies printed to Arch, a London bookseller. The copyright was purchased in a lot with other copyrights by Longman, but as it was considered of no value, Cottle begged that it might be restored to him. His request was granted, whereupon Cottle presented the copyright to Wordsworth.

In a copy—formerly Southey’s—bearing the Biggs & Cottle imprint, in the British Museum Library, in the “Contents” appears Coleridge’s “Lewti; or, the Circassian Love Chant,” where “The Nightingale” ordinarily stands. In the text of the same copy “The Nightingale” is given; and after “The Nightingale” appear cancelled leaves (pp. 63-67) which give “Lewti” in its earlier text. Southey has written in the volume: —“The Advertisement and the Circassian Love Chant in this volume were cancelled, R.S.” I cannot find that the Advertisement was cancelled; it is ordinarily given, though possibly it may be absent from some copies of the book. When “The Nightingale” was substituted for “Lewti” an additional leaf had to be inserted. The reader may notice that signature E, p. 65, is wanting, and from D to F are thirty-four pages instead of thirty-two. A leaf seems to have been inserted, and it will be seen that two pages following p. 69 are not numbered, nor counted in the pagination. In the “Contents” “The Female Vagrant” is said to begin on p. 69; in fact p. 69 gives the end of “The Nightingale.” Possibly a copy of Lyrical Ballads containing the cancelled “Lewti” alone may hereafter come to light.

Lyrical Ballads cannot be said to have lived unnoticed even in its earlier years of existence. In 1800 appeared a second edition (two volumes, the first being in the main a reprint of Lyrical Ballads, 1798), and other editions followed in 1802 and 1805.

The origin of the book is told by Wordsworth in the note on, “We are Seven” which he dictated as an old man to Miss Fenwick. Coleridge and he agreed to defray the expenses of a tour from Nether Stowey to Lynton by writing a poem to be sent to the New Monthly Magazine. In the course of their walk the “Ancient Mariner” was planned. “We returned by Dulverton to Alfoxden. The ‘Ancient Mariner’ grew and grew, till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to the expectation of five pounds, and we began to talk of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on natural subjects taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium. Accordingly I wrote ‘The Idiot Boy,’ ‘Her eyes are wild,’ &c., ‘We are Seven,’ ‘The Thorn,’ and some others.”
Wordsworth's recollection of what Coleridge had written in his *Biographia Literaria* was not exact. Two classes of poems, according to Coleridge, were to be included in the volume of *Lyrical Ballads*: “in the one the incidents and agents were to be in part at least supernatural, and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real.….For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life.” These last were to be, as we now say, naturalistic or realistic, but they were to be illuminated by the light of imagination and the significance of the incidents narrated was to be interpreted by a meditative and feeling mind.

Coleridge, as I have tried to show elsewhere (*Fortnightly Review*, 1889: “Coleridge as a Poet”), indicates precisely wherein lay the importance of the publication of this little volume in the history of our literature. There existed two powerful tendencies in the literature of the time, each of which was liable to excess when it operated alone, each of which needed to work in harmony with the other, and to take into itself something from the other—the tendency to realism, seen in such a poem as Crabbe's *The Village*, and the tendency towards romance, seen in its more extravagant forms in such writings as those of Matthew Gregory Lewis. Realism might easily have become hard, dry, literal, as we sometimes see it in Crabbe. Romance might easily have degenerated into a coarse revel in material horrors. English poetry needed, first, that romance should be saved and ennobled by the presence and the power of truth—truth moral and psychological; and secondly, that naturalism, without losing any of its fidelity to fact, should be saved and ennobled by the presence and the power of imagination—“the light that never was, on sea or land.” This precisely was what Coleridge and Wordsworth contributed to English poetry in their joint volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, which in consequence may justly be described as marking an epoch in the history of our literature.

The germ of Wordsworth's celebrated Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, which sets forth his theory of poetic diction, will be found in the “Advertisement” of the present volume. The Preface appeared first in the edition of 1800; it was considerably enlarged in the edition of 1802. It is worth while perhaps to compare the statements made by Wordsworth as to his object in the poems as made in 1798, 1800, and 1802:

“Th e majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purpose of poetic pleasure.”—Advertisement, 1798.

“Th e principal object then which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement.”—Preface, 1800.

“Th e principal object, then, which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to chuse incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature; chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate
ideas in a state of excitement.”—Preface, 1802.

It is evident that Wordsworth was at first only a part conscious of his deeper, instinctive tendencies in writing these poems; it is evident that he only gradually discovered his full purpose. From the first, indeed, he had a crude notion of his theory of poetic diction, but this also was modified as he reviewed his own practice. In the Preface of 1800, while maintaining that the language of simple men is suitable for poetic uses, he qualifies the statement by adding that it must be “purified from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust.” In the Preface of 1802 he goes farther, and admits that the language will be “modified” by a consideration that the poet “describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure.” The poet makes a selection “with true taste and feeling” from “the language really spoken by men,” and he modifies this in order to conduce to pleasure. These qualifications of Wordsworth have been often forgotten by those who have discussed his theory.

The poems by Coleridge in this volume beside “The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere” are “The Foster-Mother’s Tale,” “The Nightingale,” and “The Dungeon.”

I have added of few notes on the dates and occasions of the poems, and on variations of text. My intention at first was to record the results of a complete collation of the several texts, but it became evident that such a body of notes would add too much to the bulk of the little volume. I have therefore aimed at brevity in my notes, which however were not written until I had become intimately acquainted with the various states of the poems.

The only alterations from the original which I have designedly made are (1) a comma placed after the word “Listen,” p. 20, l. 2, instead of what looks like a full stop in my copy of the edition of 1798, but what may be in fact a broken or ill-printed comma; and (2) a space inserted between the words “horse” and “behind,” p. 101, l. 2, which words are run together in some copies of the original.

I have to thank Mr. Alfred W. Pollard for information about the copies of Lyrical Ballads in the British Museum Library, and in particular about the copy which was once in Southey’s possession.

This most interesting volume represents Coleridge and Wordsworth in their joyous prime, in 1797-98, that happy year of companionship at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden. A volume which opens with “The Ancient Mariner” and closes with the “Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey” may well be considered one of the most remarkable in the whole range of English poetry.

1891.
### Abbreviations

(as employed in the notes and collations that follow, constituting the *apparatus criticus* of this edition of the poems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LB1798</td>
<td><em>Lyrical Ballads, with a few other Poems</em> (London: J. &amp; A. Arch, 1798)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB1800</td>
<td><em>Lyrical Ballads, with other Poems, in two Volumes, by W. Wordsworth</em> (London, 1800), vol. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB1802</td>
<td><em>Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and other Poems, in two Volumes, by W. Wordsworth</em> (London, 1802), vol. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB1805</td>
<td><em>Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and other Poems, in two Volumes, by W. Wordsworth</em> (London, 1805), vol. 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINERE, IN SEVEN PARTS.

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancient Marinere came back to his own Country.

I.

1 It is an ancynent Marinere,
2 And he stoppeth one of three:
3 "By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye
4 "Now wherefore stoppest me?

5 "The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide
6 "And I am next of kin;
7 "The Guests are met, the Feast is set,—
8 "May'st hear the merry din.

9 But still he holds the wedding-guest—
10 There was a Ship, quoth he—
11 "Nay, if thou'st got a laughsome tale,
12 "Marinere! come with me."


Argument passed the Line] first sailed to the Equator LB1800; and how] how LB1800; from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean] the Ancient Mariner cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed a Sea-bird LB1800; of the strange things that befell] how he was followed by many strange Judgements LB1800; the Ancient Marinere] he LB1800.

an ancynent Marinere] an ancient Mariner LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
3 grey] gray LB1805
5 open'd] opened LB1805
9 wedding-guest] wedding guest LB1800, LB1802
12 Marinere] Mariner LB1800, LB1802, LB1805

The Rime of the Ancynent Marinere. 1797. See WCLB 5. Note by ED as follows:

Written 1797. The circumstances under which it was written are described by Wordsworth in the Fenwick note to "We are Seven." The differences between this, the earliest text, and the later version are stated in a few words by Prof. Hales: "It differs in its orthography, which is more archaic; and secondly, in its larger admission of the horrible; for instance, Death, 'that woman's mate' or 'her fleshless Phere,' as the earlier reading runs, is described with an overflowing ghastliness, and so the movements of the defunct bodies towards the end of the voyage." The prose gloss of later editions was first added in Sibylline Leaves, 1817.
He holds him with his skinny hand,
Quoth he, there was a Ship—
"Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon!
"Or my Staff shall make thee skip.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The wedding guest stood still
And listens like a three year’s child;
The Marinere hath his will.

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,
He cannot chuse but hear:
And thus spake on that ancýent man,
The bright-eyed Marinere.

The Ship was cheer’d, the Harbour clear’d—
Merrily did we drop
Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
Below the Light-house top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the Sea came he:
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the Sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath pac’d into the Hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry Minstralsy.
The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot chuse but hear:
And thus spake on that ancýent Man,
The bright-eyed Marinere.

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,
A Wind and Tempest strong!
For days and weeks it play’d us freaks—
Like Chaff we drove along.

Listen, Stranger! Mist and Snow,
And it grew wond’rous cauld:
And Ice mast-high came floating by
As green as Emerauld.

And thro’ the drifts the snowy cliffs
Did send a dismal sheen;
Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken—
The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,
The Ice was all around:
It crack’d and growl’d, and roar’d and howl’d—
Like noises of a swound.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the Fog it came;
And an it were a Christian Soul,
We hail’d it in God’s name.
The Marineres gave it biscuit-worms,
And round and round it flew:
The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit;
The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

And a good south wind sprung up behind,
The Albatross did follow;
And every day for food or play
Came to the Marinere's hollo!

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud
It perch'd for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night thro' fog smoke-white
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

"God save thee, ancients Marinere!
From the fiends that plague thee thus—
"Why look'st thou so?"—with my cross bow
I shot the Albatross.

I.

The Sun came up upon the right,
Out of the Sea came he;
And broad as a weft upon the left
Went down into the Sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet Bird did follow
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the Marinere's hollo!

II.

Marineres] Mariners
steer'd us thro'] steered us through
south] South
Mariner's] Mariner's
perch'd] perched
In Errata: "for 'fog smoke-white;' read 'fog-smoke white'"
thru'] through
Glimmer'd] Glimmered
ancient Marinere'] ancient Mariner
thus—] thus!—
"Why look'st thou so?"—with my cross bow / I shot the Albatross.
"Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross bow / I shot the Albatross."
came up] now rose
And broad as a weft upon] Still hid in the mist; and on
Ne] Nor
Mariner's] Mariner's
And I had done an hellish thing
And it would work ’em woe:
For all averr’d, I had kill’d the Bird
That made the Breeze to blow.

Ne dim ne red, like God’s own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averr’d, I had kill’d the Bird
That brought the fog and mist.
’Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
That bring the fog and mist.

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow’d free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent Sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the Sails dropt down,
’Twas sad as sad could be
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the Sea.

All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, ne breath ne motion,
As idle as a painted Ship
Upon a painted Ocean.

Water, water, every where
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Ne any drop to drink.
39 The very deeps did rot: O Christ!
40 That ever this should be!
41 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
42 Upon the slimy Sea.

43 About, about, in reel and rout
44 The Death-fires danc’d at night;
45 The water, like a witch’s oils,
46 Burnt green and blue and white.

47 And some in dreams assured were
48 Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
49 Nine fathom deep he had follow’d us
50 From the Land of Mist and Snow.

51 And every tongue thro’ utter drouth
52 Was wither’d at the root;
53 We could not speak no more than if
54 We had been choked with soot.

55 Ah wel-a-day! what evil looks
56 Had I from old and young;
57 Instead of the Cross the Albatross
58 About my neck was hung.

III.

1 I saw a something in the Sky
2 No bigger than my fist;
3 At first it seem’d a little speck
4 And then it seem’d a mist:
5 It mov’d and mov’d, and took at last
6 A certain shape, I wist.

---

39 O Christ! O Christ!  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805, LBD1890, LBD1891, LBD1898, WCLB
44 danc’d] danced  LB1805
49 follow’d] followed  LB1805
51 thro’] through  LB1805
52 wither’d] withered  LB1805
55 wel-a-day] well-a-day  LB1802, LB1805
1a-d So past a weary time; each throat / Was parch’d, and glaz’d each eye, / When, looking westward, I beheld
4 a something in the sky.  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
1-2 Missing  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
3 seem’d] seemed  LB1805
4 seem’d] seemed  LB1805
5 It mov’d and mov’d] It moved and moved  LB1805
A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it ner’d and ner’d;
And, an it dodg’d a water-sprite,
It plung’d and tack’d and veer’d.

With throat unslack’d, with black lips bak’d
Ne could we laugh, ne wail:
Then while thro’ drouth all dumb they stood
I bit my arm and suck’d the blood
And cry’d, A sail! a sail!

With throat unslack’d, with black lips bak’d
Agape they hear’d me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin
And all at once their breath drew in
As they were drinking all.

She doth not tack from side to side—
Hither to work us weal
Withouten wind, withouten tide
She steddies with upright keel.

The western wave was all a flame,
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Bewtixt us and the Sun.
And strait the Sun was fleck'd with bars
(Heaven's mother send us grace)
As if thro' a dungeon grate he peer'd
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she neres and neres!
Are those her Sails that glance in the Sun
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her naked ribs, which fleck'd
The sun that did behind them peer?
And are those two all, all the crew,
That woman and her fleshless Pheere?

His bones were black with many a crack,
All black and bare, I ween;
Jet-black and bare, save where with rust
Of mouldy damp and charnel crust
They're patch'd with purple and green.

Her lips are red, her looks are free,
Her locks are yellow as gold:
Her skin is as white as leprosy,
And she is far liker Death than he;
Her flesh makes the still air cold.
The naked Hulk alongside came
And the Twain were playing dice;
“The Game is done! I’ve won, I’ve won!”
Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

A gust of wind sterned up behind
And whistled through his bones;
Thro’ the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
Half-whistles and half-groans.

With never a whisper in the Sea
Off darts the Spectre-ship;
While clombe above the Eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright Star
Almost atween the tips.

One after one by the horned Moon
(Listen, O Stranger! to me)
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang
And cursed me with his ee.

Four times fifty living men,
With never a sigh or groan,
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump
They dropped down one by one.

Their souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe;
And every soul it passed me by,
Like the whiz of my Cross-bow.
IV.

1  "I fear thee, ancýent Marinere!
2  "I fear thy skinny hand;
3  "And thou art long and lank and brown
4  "As is the ribb’d Sea-sand.

5  "I fear thee and thy glittering eye
6  "And thy skinny hand so brown—
7  Fear not, fear not, thou wedding guest!
8  This body dropt not down.

9  Alone, alone, all all alone
10  Alone on the wide wide Sea;
11  And Christ would take no pity on
12  My soul in agony.

13  The many men so beautiful,
14  And they all dead did lie!
15  And a million million slimy things
16  Liv’d on—and so did I.

17  I look’d upon the rotting Sea,
18  And drew my eyes away;
19  I look’d upon the eldritch deck,
20  And there the dead men lay.

21  I look’d to Heaven, and try’d to pray;
22  But or ever a prayer had gusht,
23  A wicked whisper came and made
24  My heart as dry as dust.
I clos’d my lids and kept them close,
Till the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Ne rot, ne reek did they;
The look with which they look’d on me,
Had never pass’d away.

An orphan’s curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high:
But O! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man’s eye!
Seven days, seven nights I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemock’d the sultry main
Like morning frosts yspread;
But where the ship’s huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.
Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water-snakes:
They mov'd in tracks of shining white;
And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gusht from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

O sleep, it is a gentle thing
Belov'd from pole to pole!
To Mary-queen the praise be yeven
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven
That slid into my soul.
The silly buckets on the deck
That had so long remain'd,
I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew
And when I awoke it rain'd.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams
And still my body drank.

I mov'd and could not feel my limbs,
I was so light, almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed Ghost.

The roaring wind! it roar'd far off,
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air bursts into life,
And a hundred fire-flags sheen
To and fro they are hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out
The stars dance on between.

The coming wind doth roar more loud;
The sails do sigh, like sedge:
The rain pours down from one black cloud
And the Moon is at its edge.
31 Hark! hark! the thick black cloud is cleft,
32 And the Moon is at its side:
33 Like waters shot from some high crag,
34 The lightning falls with never a jag
35 A river steep and wide.

36 The strong wind reach'd the ship: it roar'd
37 And dropp'd down, like a stone!
38 Beneath the lightning and the moon
39 The dead men gave a groan.

40 They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,
41 Ne spake, ne mov'd their eyes:
42 It had been strange, even in a dream
43 To have seen those dead men rise.

44 The helmsman steerd, the ship mov'd on;
45 Yet never a breeze up-blew;
46 The Marineres all 'gan work the ropes,
47 Where they were wont to do:

48 They rais'd their limbs like lifeless tools—
49 We were a ghastly crew.

50 The body of my brother's son
51 Stood by me knee to knee:
52 The body and I pull'd at one rope,
53 But he said nought to me—
54 And I quak'd to think of my own voice
55 How frightful it would be!

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31 Hark! Hark! the thick black cloud was cleft, and still  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
32 And the Moon was at its side  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
34 The loud wind never reached the Ship  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
37 And dropp'd down, like a stone! Yet now the Ship mov'd on  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
40 groan'd groaned  LB1805; stirr'd stirred  LB1805
41 Ne nor  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805; ne mov'd nor mov'd  LB1802, LB1802, LB1805; nor moved  LB1805
44 steerd steered  LB1805; mov'd moved  LB1805
46 Marineres Mariners  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
48 rais'd raised  LB1805
52 pull'd pulled  LB1805
54-55 Missing  LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
56 The day-light dawn’d—they dropp’d their arms,
57 And cluster’d round the mast:
58 Sweet sounds rose slowly thro’ their mouths
59 And from their bodies pass’d.
60 Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
61 Then darted to the sun:
62 Slowly the sounds came back again
63 Now mix’d, now one by one.
64 Sometimes a dropping from the sky
65 I heard the Lavrock sing;
66 Sometimes all little birds that are
67 How they seem’d to fill the sea and air
68 With their sweet jargoning,
69 And now ‘twas like all instruments,
70 Now like a lonely flute;
71 And now it is an angel’s song
72 That makes the heavens be mute.
73 It ceas’d: yet still the sails made on
74 A pleasant noise till noon,
75 A noise like of a hidden brook
76 In the leafy month of June,
77 That to the sleeping woods all night
78 Singeth a quiet tune.
79 Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest!
80 "Marinere! thou hast thy will:
81 "For that, which comes out of thine eye, doth make
82 "My body and soul to be still.”
83 Never sadder tale was told
84 To a man of woman born:
85 Sadder and wiser thou wedding-guest!
86 Thou’lt rise to morrow morn.

87 Never sadder tale was heard
88 By a man of woman born:
89 The Marineres all return’d to work
90 As silent as beforne.

91 The Marineres all ‘gan pull the ropes,
92 But look at me they n’old:
93 Thought I, I am as thin as air—
94 They cannot me behold.

95 Till noon we silently sail’d on
96 Yet never a breeze did breathe:
97 Slowly and smoothly went the ship
98 Mov’d onward from beneath.

99 Under the keel nine fathom deep
100 From the land of mist and snow
101 The spirit slid: and it was He
102 That made the Ship to go.
103 The sails at noon left off their tune
104 And the Ship stood still also.

105 The sun right up above the mast
106 Had fix’d her to the ocean:
107 But in a minute she ‘gan stir
108 With a short uneasy motion—
109 Backwards and forwards half her length
110 With a short uneasy motion.

111 Then, like a pawing horse let go,
112 She made a sudden bound:
113 It flung the blood into my head,
114 And I fell into a swound.
How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life return'd,
I heard and in my soul discern'd
Two voices in the air,

"Is it he? quoth one, "Is this the man?
"By him who died on cross,
"With his cruel bow he lay'd full low
"The harmless Albatross.

"The spirit who bideth by himself
"In the land of mist and snow,
"He lov'd the bird that lov'd the man
"Who shot him with his bow.

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he the man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.
VI.

First Voice.

1 “But tell me, tell me! speak again,
2 “Thy soft response renewing—
3 “What makes that ship drive on so fast?
4 “What is the Ocean doing?

Second Voice.

5 “Still as a Slave before his Lord,
6 “The Ocean hath no blast:
7 “His great bright eye most silently
8 “Up to the moon is cast—

9 “If he may know which way to go,
10 “For she guides him smooth or grim.
11 “See, brother, see! how graciously
12 “She looketh down on him.

First Voice.

13 “But why drives on that ship so fast
14 “Withouten wave or wind?

Second Voice.

15 “The air is cut away before,
16 “And closes from behind.

17 “Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high,
18 “Or we shall be belated:
19 “For slow and slow that ship will go,
20 “When the Marinere’s trance is abated.”

21 I woke, and we were sailing on
22 As in a gentle weather:
23 ‘Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
24 The dead men stood together.
25 All stood together on the deck,
26    For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
27 All fix'd on me their stony eyes
28    That in the moon did glitter.
29 The pang, the curse, with which they died,
30    Had never pass'd away:
31 I could not draw my een from theirs
32    Nor turn them up to pray.
33 And in its time the spell was snapt,
34    And I could move my een:
35 I look'd far-forth, but little saw
36    Of what might else be seen.
37 Like one, that on a lonely road
38    Doth walk in fear and dread,
39 And having once turn'd round, walks on
40    And turns no more his head:
41 Because he knows, a frightful fiend
42    Doth close behind him tread.
43 But soon there breath'd a wind on me,
44    Nor sound nor motion made:
45 Its path was not upon the sea
46    In ripple or in shade.
47 It rais'd my hair, it fann'd my cheek,
48    Like a meadow-gale of spring—
49 It mingled strangely with my fears,
50    Yet it felt like a welcoming.

27 fix'd] fixed LB1805
30 pass'd] passed LB1805
31 een] eyes LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
32 Ne] Nor LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
33 in its time the] now this LB1800, LB1802, LB 1805 snapt,] snapt: once more LB1800, LB1802, LB1805;
34 And I could move my een:] I view'd the ocean green, LB1800, LB1802 I viewed the ocean green, LB1805
36 might else be] had else been LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
37 lonely] lonesome in LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
39 turn'd] turned LB1805
43 breath'd] breathed LB1805
44 Ne sound ne] Nor sound nor LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
47 rais'd] raised LB1805; fann'd] fanned LB1805
49 frangely] strangely LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sail’d softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

O dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the Hill? Is this the Kirk?
Is this mine own countrée?

We drifted o’er the Harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
“O let me be awake, my God!
“Or let me sleep alway!”

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moon light lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The moonlight bay was white all o’er,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
Like as of torches came.
A little distance from the prow
Those dark-red shadows were;
But soon I saw that my own flesh
Was red as in a glare.

I turn'd my head in fear and dread,
And by the holy rood,
The bodies had advanc'd, and now
Before the mast they stood.

They lifted up their stiff right arms,
They held them strait and tight;
And each right-arm burnt like a torch,
A torch that's borne upright.
Their stony eye-balls glitter'd on
In the red and smoky light.

I pray'd and turn'd my head away
Forth looking as before.
There was no breeze upon the bay,
No wave against the shore.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steep'd in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.
A little distance from the prow

Those crimson shadows were:

I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—

O Christ! what saw I there?

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat;

And by the Holy rood

A man all light, a seraph-man,

On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand:

It was a heavenly sight:

They stood as signals to the land,

Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand,

No voice did they impart—

No voice; but O! the silence sank,

Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,

I heard the pilot's cheer:

My head was turn'd perforce away

And I saw a boat appear.

Then vanish'd all the lovely lights;

The bodies rose anew:

With silent pace, each to his place,

Came back the ghastly crew.

The wind, that shade nor motion made,

On me alone it blew.

97 turn'd] turned LB1805
100 Chrift] Christ LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
101 lifelefs] lifeless LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
105 wav'd] waved LB1805
109 wav'd] waved LB1805
113 Eftsones] But soon LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
115 turn'd] turned LB1805
The pilot, and the pilot's boy
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy,
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

VII.

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the Sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with Marineres
That come from a far Contrée.

He kneels at morn and noon and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss, that wholly hides
The rotted old Oak-stump.

The Skiff-boat ne'rd: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair
That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith! the Hermit said—
"And they answer'd not our cheer.
The planks look warp'd, and see those sails
"How thin they are and sere!
"I never saw aught like to them
Unless perchance it were
20 “The skeletons of leaves that lag
21 “My forest brook along:
22 “When the Ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
23 “And the Owlet whoops to the wolf below
24 “That eats the she-wolf’s young.

25 “Dear Lord! it has a fiendish look—
26 (The Pilot made reply)
27 “I am a-fear’d.—”Push on, push on!
28 “Said the Hermit cheerily.

29 The Boat came closer to the Ship,
30 But I ne spake ne stirr’d!
31 The Boat came close beneath the Ship,
32 And strait a sound was heard!

33 Under the water it rumbled on,
34 Still louder and more dread:
35 It reach’d the Ship, it split the bay;
36 The Ship went down like lead.

37 Stunn’d by that loud and dreadful sound,
38 Which sky and ocean smote:
39 Like one that hath been seven days drown’d
40 My body lay afloat:

41 But, swift as dreams, myself I found
42 Within the Pilot’s boat.

43 Upon the whirl, where sank the Ship,
44 The boat spun round and round:
45 And all was still, save that the hill
46 Was telling of the sound.

26 Pilot] pilot LB 1805
27 a-fear’d] a-fear’d LB1805
30 ne spake ne stirr’d] nor spake nor stirr’d LB1800, LB1802, LB1805 nor spake nor stirred LB1805
32 strait] straight LB1805
35 reach’d the Ship] reached the ship LB1805
36 Ship] ship LB1805
37 stunn’d] stunned LB1805
I mov’d my lips: the Pilot shriek’d
And fell down in a fit.
The Holy Hermit rais’d his eyes
And pray’d where he did sit.
I took the oars: the Pilot’s boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laugh’d loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro,
“Ha! ha!” quoth he—“full plain I see,
“The devil knows how to row.”

And all in mine own Countrée
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepp’d forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

“O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man!
The Hermit cross’d his brow—
“Say quick,” quoth he, “I bid thee say
“What manner man art thou?

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench’d
With a woeful agony,
Which forc’d me to begin my tale
And then it left me free.

Since then at an uncertain hour,
Now oftimes and now fewer,
That anguish comes and makes me tell
My ghastly aventure.
I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
The moment that his face I see
I know the man that must hear me;
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The Wedding-guests are there;
But in the Garden-bower the Bride
And Bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little Vesper-bell
Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the Marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the Kirk
With a goodly company.

To walk together to the Kirk
And all together pray,
While each to his great father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And Youths, and Maidens gay.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well,
Both man and bird and beast.

84 Wedding] wedding LB1805
80 Garden] garden LB1805
81 Bride] bride LB1805 [Bride] bride LB1805
82 Vesper] vesper LB1805
84 Wedding] wedding LB1805
88 Marriage] marriage LB1805
91 company] company.— LB1805
94 father] Father LB1805
96 Youths] youths LB1805 Maidens] maidens LB1805
97 but] But LB1805
99 In errata: “Omit comma after ‘loveth well,’” loveth well,] loveth well LB1800, LB1802, LB1805, WCLB
101 He prayeth best who loveth best,
102 All things both great and small:
103 For the dear God, who loveth us,
104 He made and loveth all.

105 The Marinere, whose eye is bright,
106 Whose beard with age is hoar,
107 Is gone; and now the wedding-guest
108 Turn’d from the bridegroom’s door.

109 He went, like one that hath been stunn’d
110 And is of sense forlorn:
111 A sadder and a wiser man
112 He rose the morrow morn.
The Foster-Mother’s Tale,
A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

FOSTER-MOTHER.

1 I never saw the man whom you describe.

MARIA.

2 ’Tis strange! he spake of you familiarly
3 As mine and Albert’s common Foster-mother.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

4 Now blessings on the man, who’er he be,
5 That joined your names with mine! O my sweet lady,
6 As often as I think of those dear times
7 When you two little ones would stand at eve
8 On each side of my chair, and make me learn
9 All you had learnt in the day; and how to talk
10 In gentle phrase, then bid me sing to you---
11 ’Tis more like heaven to come than what has been.

MARIA.

12 O my dear Mother! this strange man has left me
13 Troubled with wilder fancies, than the moon
14 Breeds in the love-sick maid who gazes at it,
15 Till lost in inward vision, with wet eye
16 She gazes idly!—But that entrance, Mother!

*The Foster-Mother’s Tale, A Dramatic Fragment.* Extracted from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s play Osorio (1797). See WCLB 126. Note by ED as follows:

This is a fragment from the fourth act of Coleridge’s Osorio, afterwards acted and printed in its revised form as Remorse. The author considered the scene unfit for the stage, and printed it in the Appendix to Remorse. A version from a MS. is given by Cottle in his Early Recollections of Coleridge, 1837, vol. i. pp. 235-238. The opening lines are omitted from the later editions of Lyrical Ballads, where the scene begins with—

“But that entrance, Mother!”

The line—

“And once as he was working in the cellar.”

Becomes in Lyrical Ballads, 1802 and 1805—

“And once he was working near the cell.”

In Remorse—

“And once as he was working near this dungeon.”
FOSTER-MOTHER.
17 Can no one hear? It is a perilous tale!

MARIA.
18 No one.

FOSTER-MOTHER.
18 My husband’s father told it me,
19 Poor old Leoni!—Angels rest his soul!
20 He was a woodman, and could fell and saw
21 With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
22 Which props the hanging wall of the old chapel?
23 Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree
24 He found a baby wrapt in mosses, lined
25 With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
26 As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
27 And reared him at the then Lord Velez’ cost.
28 And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,
29 A pretty boy, but most unteachable—
30 And never learnt a prayer, nor told a bead,
31 But knew the names of birds, and mocked their notes,
32 And whistled, as he were a bird himself:
33 And all the autumn ’twas his only play
34 To get the seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them
35 With earth and water, on the stumps of trees.
36 A Friar, who gathered simples in the wood,
37 A grey-haired man—he loved this little boy,
38 The boy loved him—and, when the Friar taught him,
39 He soon could write with the pen: and from that time,
40 Lived chiefly at the Convent or the Castle.
41 So he became a very learned youth.
42 But Oh! poor wretch!—he read, and read, and read,
43 ’Till his brain turned—and ere his twentieth year,
44 He had unlawful thoughts of many things:
45 And though he prayed, he never loved to pray
46 With holy men, nor in a holy place—
47 But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
48 The late Lord Velez ne’er was wearied with him.
And once, as by the north side of the Chapel
They stood together, chained in deep discourse,
The earth heaved under them with such a groan,
That the wall tottered, and had well-nigh fallen
Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frightened;
A fever seized him, and he made confession
Of all the heretical and lawless talk
Which brought this judgment: so the youth was seized
And cast into that hole. My husband's father
Sobbed like a child—it almost broke his heart:
And once as he was working in the cellar,
He heard a voice distinctly; 'twas the youth's,
Who sung a doleful song about green fields,
How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah,
To hunt for food, and be a naked man,
And wander up and down at liberty.
He always doted on the youth, and now
His love grew desperate; and defying death,
He made that cunning entrance I described:
And the young man escaped.

MARIA.

'Tis a sweet tale:
Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
His rosy face besoiled with unwiped tears.—
And what became of him?

FOSTER-MOTHER.

He went on ship-board
With those bold voyagers, who made discovery
Of golden lands. Leoni's younger brother
Went likewise, and when he returned to Spain,
He told Leoni, that the poor mad youth,
Soon after they arrived in that new world,
In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
And all alone, set sail by silent moonlight
Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more: but 'tis supposed,
He lived and died among the savage men.
Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree

which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, yet commanding a beautiful prospect.

1 —Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
2 Far from all human dwelling: what if here
3 No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb;
4 What if these barren boughs the bee not loves;
5 Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
6 That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
7 By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree…. 1795–1797. See WCLB 127. Note by ED as follows:

The date of this poem is 1795, but it was in part written by Wordsworth when at school at Hawkshead. The alterations in the later texts are not many. The following is the most considerable:

“In youth by science nursed
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth,
A favored being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow, ’gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate
And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The word, for so I thought,
Owed him no service: he was like a plant

Fair to the sun, the darling of the winds,
But hung with fruit which no one, that passed by,
Regarded, and, his spirit damped at once,
With indignation did he turn away
And with,” &c. 1800.

In 1802 Wordsworth omitted the image of the plant fruitful but unregarded, reading—

“Owed him no service: wherefore he at once
With indignation turn’d himself away.”

“The individual whose habits and character are here given, was a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a man of talent and learning, who had been educated at one of our Universities, and returned to pass his time in seclusion on his own estate. He died a bachelor in middle age.” —Wordsworth: Fenwick note.
8 ————Who he was
9 That piled these stones, and with the mossy sod
10 First covered o’er, and taught this aged tree,
11 Now wild, to bend its arms in circling shade,
12 I well remember.—He was one who own’d
13 No common soul. In youth, by genius nurs’d,
14 And big with lofty views, he to the world
15 Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
16 Of dissolve tongues, ’gainst jealousy, and hate,
17 And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
18 All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
19 At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
20 And with the food of pride sustained his soul
21 In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
22 Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
23 His only visitants a straggling sheep,
24 The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper;
25 And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
26 And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o’er,
27 Fixing his downward eye, he many an hour
28 A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
29 An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
30 And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
31 On the more distant scene; how lovely ’tis
32 Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became
33 Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
34 The beauty still more beauteous. Nor, that time,
Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and man himself, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
With mournful joy, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died, this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O, be wiser thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.
The Nightingale;
A conversational poem, written in April, 1798.

1. No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
2. Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
3. Of sullen Light, no obscure trembling hues.
4. Come, we will rest on this old mossy Bridge!
5. You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
6. But hear no murmuring; it flows silently
7. O’er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
8. A balmy night! and tho’ the stars be dim
9. Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
10. That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
11. A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
12. And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
13. “Most musical, most melancholy”* Bird!
15. In nature there is nothing melancholy.
16. —But some night-wandering Man, whose heart was pierc’d
17. With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
18. Or slow distemper or neglected love,
19. (And so, poor Wretch! fill’d all things with himself
20. And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
21. Of his own sorrows) and he such as he
22. First nam’d these notes a melancholy strain;
23. And many a poet echoes the conceit,

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*Wordsworth’s footnote: “*Most musical, most melancholy.*’ This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that or mere description: it is spoken in the character of the melancholy Man, and has therefore a dramatic propriety. The Author makes this remark, to rescue himself from the charge of having alluded with levity to a line in Milton: a charge than which none could be more painful to him, except perhaps that of having ridiculed his Bible.”
The Nightingale

Poet, who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretch’d his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell
By sun or moonlight, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in nature’s immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all nature lovelier, and itself
Be lov’d, like nature!—But ‘twill not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical
Who lose the deep’ning twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O’er Philomela’s pity-pleading strains.
My Friend, and my Friend’s Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature’s sweet voices always full of love
And joyance! ‘Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful, that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music! And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge
Which the great lord inhabits not: and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one play I knew
So many Nightingales: and far and near
In wood and thicket over the wide grove
They answer and provoke each other’s songs—
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
Stirring the air with such an harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
Whose dewy leaves are but half disclos’d,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistning, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle maid
Hard by the Castle, and at latest eve,
(Even like a Lady vow’d and dedicate
To something more than nature in the grove)
Glides thro’ the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft, a moment’s space
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence: till the Moon
Emerging, hath awaken’d earth and sky
With one sensation, and those wakeful Birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if one quick and sudden Gale had swept
An hundred air harps! And she hath watch’d
Many a Nightingale perch giddily
On blossmy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song,
Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.
Farewell, O Warbler! till to morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again!
Full fain it would delay me!—My dear Babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature’s playmate. He knows well
The evening star: and once when we awoke
In the most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant’s dream)
I hurried with him to our orchard plot,
And he beholds the moon, and hush’d at once
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes that swam with undropt tears
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well—
It is a father’s tale. But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate Joy! Once more farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends! farewell.

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91 —My] My {LB1802, LB1805}
102 hush’d] hushed {LB1805}
By Derwent’s side my Father’s cottage stood,
(The Woman thus her artless story told)
One field, a flock, and what the neighbouring flood
Supplied, to him were more than mines of gold.
Light was my sleep; my days in transport roll’d:
With thoughtless joy I stretch’d along the shore
My father’s nets, or watched, when from the fold
High o’er the cliffs I led my fleecy store,
A dizzy depth below! his boat and twinkling oar.

My father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred,
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

This is an extract from the poem first published in full—seventy-four stanzas—in 1842 with the title “Guilt and Sorrow; or, incidents upon Salisbury Plain.” The date assigned is 1793-94, though it should be observed that in the Fenwick note Wordsworth says, “In fact, much of the Female Vagrant’s story was composed at least two years before.” In the summer of 1793 he spent two days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain. The war with France filled his heart with melancholy forebodings. “The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In these reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.”—Advertisement, 1842. “All that relates to her [the Female Vagrant’s] sufferings as a soldier’s wife in America, and her condition of mind during her voyage home, were faithfully taken from the report made to me of her own case by a friend who had been subjected to the same trials and affected in the same way.”—Fenwick note. The alterations of text are many and important, and will well repay study. Beside those made by Wordsworth from the point of view of poetic art, there are others the object of which seems to be to moderate the force of indictment of society. In its first form the whole poem must have given expression to much of the writer’s youthful Revolutionary sentiment.
Can I forget what charms did once adorn
My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme,
And rose and lily for the sabbath morn?
The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;
The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering at May's dewy prime;
The swans, that, when I sought the water-side,
From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride.

The staff I yet remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore
When the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I deck'd;
My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,
When stranger passed, so often I have check'd;
The red-breast known for years, which at my casement peck'd.

Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away:
Then rose a mansion proud our woods among,
And cottage after cottage owned its sway,
No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray
Through pastures not his own, the master took;
My Father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
He loved his old hereditary nook,
And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.
But, when he had refused the proffered gold,
To cruel injuries he became a prey,
Sore traversed in whate’er he bought and sold:
His troubles grew upon him day by day,
Till all his substance fell into decay.
His little range of water was denied;*
All but the bed where his old body lay,
All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

Can I forget that miserable hour,
When from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower,
That on his marriage-day sweet music made?
Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid,
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed,—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers,
Glimmer’d our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

There was a youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say.
’Mid the green mountains many and many a song
We two had sung, like little birds in May.
When we began to tire of childish play
We seemed still more and more to prize each other:
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

**Wordworth’s footnote: “Several of the Lakes in the north of English are let to different fishermen in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock.”**
His father said, that to a distant town
He must repair, to ply the artist's trade.
What tears of bitter grief till then unknown!
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned:—we had no other aid.
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept,
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said
He well could love in grief: his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

Four years each day with daily bread was blest,
By constant toil and constant prayer supplied.
Three lovely infants lay upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died
When sad distress reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that from him the grave did hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience could not heal.

'Twas a hard change, an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round, to sweep the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view:
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew;
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.
There foul neglect for months and months we bore,
Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred.
Green fields before us and our native shore,
By fever, from polluted air incurred,
Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard.
Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,
Mid that long sickness, and those hopes deferr'd,
That happier days we never more must view:
The parting signal streamed, at last the land withdrew,

But from delay the summer calms were past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains-high before the howling blast.
We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep
Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue.
We reached the western world, a poor, devoted crew.

Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
All that is dear in being! better far
In Wants most lonely cave till death to pine,
Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
Protract a curst existence, with the brood
That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood.

100 foul neglect for months and months] long were we neglected, and LB1802, LB1805
101 Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred.] Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weigh'd; LB1802, LB1805
103 By fever, from polluted air incurred.] We breath'd a pestilential air that made LB1802, LB1805
104 was made, for which no knell was heard.] for which no knell was heard. We pray'd LB1802, LB1805
105 Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,] For our departure; wished and wished— LB1802, LB1805
106 deferr'd] delay'd LB1802, LB1805
109 from delay the summer calms were] the calm summer season now was LB1802, LB1805
110 deep] Deep LB1802, LB1805
112 We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep] And many perish'd in the whirlwind's sweep] LB1802 perished LB1805
113 Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep] We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep LB1802, LB1805
117 reached the western world] reach'd the Western World LB1802, LB1805
118-126 lacking LB1802, LB1805
The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would thy brain unsettle even to hear.
All perished—all, in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
By the first beams of dawning light impress’d,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main.
The very ocean has its hour of rest,
That comes not to the human mourner’s breast.
Remote from man, and storms of mortal care,
A heavenly silence did the waves invest;
I looked and looked along the silent air,
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps!
And groans, that rage of racking famine spoke,
Where looks inhuman dwelt on festering heaps!
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke!
The shriek that from the distant battle broke!
The mine’s dire earthquake, and the pallid host
Driven by the bombs incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish toss’d,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!
Yet does that burst of woe congeal my frame,
When the dark streets appeared to heave and gape,
While like a sea the storming army came,
And Fire from Hell reared his gigantic shape,
And Murder, by the ghastly gleam, and Rape
Seized their joint prey, the mother and the child!
But from these crazing thoughts my brain, escape!
—For weeks the balmy air breathed soft and mild,
And on the gliding vessel Heaven and Ocean smiled.

Some mighty gulph of separation past,
I seemed transported to another world:—
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurl’d,
And whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home,
And from all hope I was forever hurled.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

And oft, robb’d of my perfect mind, I thought
At last my feet a resting-place had found:
Here will I weep in peace, (so fancy wrought,)
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
All day, my ready tomb the ocean-flood—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound:
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.

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Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
All day, my ready tomb the ocean-flood—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound:
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.
By grief enfeebled was I turned adrift,
Helpless as sailor cast on desart rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
I lay, where with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross timber of an out-house hung;
How dismal tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I frame my tongue.

So passed another day, and so the third:
Then did I try, in vain, the crowd's resort,
In deep despair by frightful wishes stirr'd,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort:
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
Dizzy my brain, with interruption short
Of hideous sense; I sunk, nor step could crawl,
And thence was borne away to neighbouring hospital.

Recovery came with food: but still, my brain
Was weak, nor of the past had memory.
I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
Of many things which never troubled me;
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with careless cruelty,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans, which, as they said, would make a dead man start.

182 desart] desert LB1805
185 mates, the cock] Mates, the Cock LB1802, LB1805
187 How dismal] Dismally LB1802, LB1805
190 passed] pass'd LB1802, LB1805
193 fort] Fort: LB1802, LB1805
195 linked,] link'd LB1802, LB1805
196 Dizzy my brain, with interruption] And I had many interruptions LB1802, LB1805
197 sunk,] sank, LB1802, LB1805
198 borne away to neighbouring hospital.] carried to a neighboring Hospital. LB1802, LB1805
These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
Memory, though slow, returned with strength; and thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and as the sun retired,
Came, where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
The wild brood saw me weep, my fate enquired,
And gave me food, and rest, more welcome, more desired.

My heart is touched to think that men like these,
The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
And their long holiday that feared not grief,
For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
No plough their sinews strained; on grating road
No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
In every vale for their delight was stowed:
For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder flowed.

Semblance, with straw and panniered ass, they made
Of potters wandering on from door to door:
But life of happier sort to me pourtrayed,
And other joys my fancy to allure;
The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted, and companions boon
Well met from far with revelry secure,
In depth of forest glade, when jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.
The Female Vagrant

But ill it suited me, in journey dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch;
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch;
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill;
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
Poor Father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help, and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Ill was I then for toil or service fit:
With tears whose course no effort could confine,
By high-way side forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I lived upon the mercy of the fields,
And oft of cruelty the sky accused;
On hazard, or what general bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The fields I for my bed have often used:
But, what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is, that I have my inner self abused,
Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.
Three years a wanderer, often have I view’d,
In tears, the sun towards that country tend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
And now across this moor my steps I bend—
Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
Have I.—She ceased, and weeping turned away,
As if because her tale was at an end
She wept;—because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.
Goody Blake and Harry Gill,  
A True Story.

1 Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter?  
2 What is't that ails young Harry Gill?  
3 That evermore his teeth they chatter,  
4 Chatter, chatter, chatter still.  
5 Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,  
6 Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;  
7 He has a blanket on his back,  
8 And coats enough to smother nine.

9 In March, December, and in July,  
10 'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;  
11 The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,  
12 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.  
13 At night, at morning, and at noon,  
14 'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;  
15 Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,  
16 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.

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Goody Blake and Harry Gill, a True Story. 1798. See WCLB131. Note by ED as follows:  
Composed, 1798, at Alfoxden. The story was taken from Erasmus Darwin’s Zoonomia (vol.iv.pp. 68-69. Ed. 1801), where we read as follows: “I received good information of the truth of the following case, which was published a few years ago in the newspapers. A young farmer in Warwickshire, finding his hedges broke, and the sticks carried away during a frosty season, determined to watch for the thief. He lay many cold hours under a haystack, and at length an old woman, like a witch in a play, approached, and began to pull up the hedge; he waited till she had tied up her bottle of sticks, and was carrying them off, that he might convict her of the theft, and then springing from his concealment, he seized his prey with violent threats. After some altercation, in which her load was left upon the ground, she kneeled upon her bottle of sticks, and, raising her arms to Heaven beneath the bright moon then at the full, spoke to the farmer already shivering with cold, ‘Heaven grant, that thou mayest never know again the blessing to be warm.’ He complained of cold all the next day, and wrote an upper coat, and in a few days another, and in a fortnight took to his bed, always saying nothing made him warm, he covered himself with many blankets, and had a sieve over his face, as he lay; and from this one insane idea he kept this bed above twenty years for fear of the cold air, till at length he died.” The changes of text in Wordsworth’s poems are few. For the last four lines of the fourth stanza he substituted the following—

“Remote from sheltered village-green,  
On a hill’s northern side she dwelt,  
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,  
And hoary dews are slow to melt.”
Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover,
His voice was like the voice of three.
Auld Goody Blake was old and poor,
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed her door,
 Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling,
And then her three hours' work at night!
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
—This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,
Her hut was on a cold hill-side,
And in that country coals are dear,
For they come far by wind and tide.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage,
But she, poor woman, dwelt alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the canty dame
Would sit, as any linnet gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh! then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead;
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed,
And then for cold not sleep a wink.
Oh joy for her! when e’er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout,
And scatter’d many a lusty splinter,
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile before-hand, wood or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring,
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake,
And vow’d that she should be detected,
And he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he’d go,
And to the fields his road would take,
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watch’d to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand;
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble-land.
—He hears a noise—he’s all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—’Tis Goody Blake,
She’s at the hedge of Harry Gill.
81 Right glad was he when he beheld her:
82 Stick after stick did Goody pull,
83 He stood behind a bush of elder,
84 Till she had filled her apron full.
85 When with her load she turned about,
86 The bye-road back again to take,
87 He started forward with a shout,
88 And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

89 And fiercely by the arm he took her,
90 And by the arm he held her fast,
91 And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
92 And cried, “I’ve caught you then at last!”
93 Then Goody, who had nothing said,
94 Her bundle from her lap let fall;
95 And kneeling on the sticks, she pray’d
96 To God that is the judge of all.

97 She pray’d, her wither’d hand uprearing,
98 While Harry held her by the arm—
99 “God! who art never out of hearing,
100 “O may he never more be warm!”
101 The cold, cold moon above her head,
102 Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
103 Young Harry heard what she had said,
104 And icy-cold he turned away.

105 He went complaining all the morrow
106 That he was cold and very chill:
107 His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
108 Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
109 That day he wore a riding-coat,
110 But not a whit the warmer he:
111 Another was on Thursday brought,
112 And ere the Sabbath he had three.
‘Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinn’d;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry’s flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say ’tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
“Poor Harry Gill is very cold.”
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.
LYRICAL BALLADS 1798

LINES
WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE FROM MY HOUSE,
AND SENT BY MY LITTLE BOY TO THE
PERSON TO WHOM THEY ARE
ADDRESSED

1 It is the first mild day of March:
2 Each minute sweeter than before,
3 The red-breast sings from the tall larch
4 That stands beside our door.

5 There is a blessing in the air,
6 Which seems a sense of joy to yield
7 To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
8 And grass in the green field.

9 My Sister! (‘tis a wish of mine)
10 Now that our morning meal is done,
11 Make haste, your morning task resign;
12 Come forth and feel the sun.

13 Edward will come with you, and pray,
14 Put on with speed your woodland dress,
15 And bring no book, for this one day
16 We’ll give to idleness.

17 No joyless forms shall regulate
18 Our living Calendar:
19 We from to-day, my friend, will date
20 The opening of the year.

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Lines written at a small distance from my House… 1798. See WCLB 132. Note by ED as follows:
Composed, 1798, in front of Alfoxden House. Afterwards named “To my Sister.” The little boy was the son of Basil Montagu. The text was scarcely altered. In the seventh stanza the second line became—

“Than years of toiling reason.”
Love, now an universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth,
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than fifty years of reason;
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts may make,
Which they shall long obey;
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above;
We'll frame the measure of our souls,
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress,
And bring no book; for this one day
We'll give to idleness.
SIMON LEE, THE OLD HUNTSMAN,  
WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED.

1 In the sweet shire of Cardigan,  
2 Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,  
3 An old man dwells, a little man,  
4 I've heard he once was tall.  
5 Of years he has upon his back,  
6 No doubt, a burthen weighty;  
7 He says he is three score and ten,  
8 But others say he's eighty.

9 A long blue livery-coat has he,  
10 That's fair behind, and fair before;  
11 Yet, meet him where you will, you see  
12 At once that he is poor.  
13 Full five and twenty years he lived  
14 A running huntsman merry;  
15 And, though he has but one eye left,  
16 His cheek is like a cherry.

17 No man like him the horn could sound,  
18 And no man was so full of glee;  
19 To say the least, four counties round  
20 Had heard of Simon Lee;  
21 His master's dead, and no one now  
22 Dwells in the hall of Ivor;  
23 Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;  
24 He is the sole survivor.

---

Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman. 1798. See WCLB 133. Note by ED as follows:  
Composed, 1798. “This old man had been huntsman to the squires of Alfoxden.” His cottage stood a little way from the entrance to Alfoxden Park. “The expressions when the hounds were out ‘I dearly love their voices’ was word for word from his own lips.”—Fenwick note. The alterations of text are very numerous. They are chiefly directed to attaining a better sequence in the stanzas which describe Simon Lee, and in making that description less grotesque in its details.
Simon Lee. *The Old Huntsman*

25 His hunting feats have him bereft
26 Of his right eye, as you may see:
27 And then, what limbs those feats have left
28 To poor old Simon Lee!
29 He has no son, he has no child,
30 His wife, an aged woman,
31 Lives with him, near the waterfall,
32 Upon the village common.

33 And he is lean and he is sick,
34 His little body's half awry
35 His ancles they are swoln and thick;
36 His legs are thin and dry.
37 When he was young he little knew
38 Of husbandry or tillage;
39 And now he's forced to work, though weak,
40 —The weakest in the village.

41 He all the country could outrun,
42 Could leave both man and horse behind;
43 And often, ere the race was done,
44 He reeled and was stone-blind.
45 And still there's something in the world
46 At which his heart rejoices;
47 For when the chiming hounds are out,
48 He dearly loves their voices!

49 Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
50 And does what Simon cannot do;
51 For she, not over stout of limb,
52 Is stouter of the two.
53 And though you with your utmost skill
54 From labour could not wean them,
55 Alas! 'tis very little, all
56 Which they can do between them.

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25-32 *lacking in LB1802, LB1805*

34 *little* dwindled *LB1800, LB1802, LB1805*

48a-48h *same as* 25-32 *LB1802, LB1805 (though in 30/48f wife) Wife LB1802, LB1805; and in 32/48h common] Common LB1802, LB1805*

25-32 *(with slight revisions noted) are transposed with fifth and sixth stanzas (33-40 and 41-48)*
Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what avails the land to them,
Which they can till no longer?

Few months of life has he in store,
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
His poor old ancles swell.
My gentle reader, I perceive,
How patiently you’ve waited,
And I’m afraid that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
I hope you’ll kindly take it;
It is no tale; but should you think,
Perhaps a tale you’ll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old man doing all he could
About the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock totter’d in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.
“You’re overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool” to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffer’d aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I sever’d,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavour’d.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I’ve heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning.
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has oftner left me mourning.
Anecdote for Fathers,
Shewing how the art of lying may be taught.

1 I have a boy of five years old,
2 His face is fair and fresh to see;
3 His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
4 And dearly he loves me.

5 One morn we stroll'd on our dry walk,
6 Our quiet house all full in view,
7 And held such intermitted talk
8 As we are wont to do.

9 My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
10 I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
11 My pleasant home, when spring began,
12 A long, long year before.

"The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

"Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, though I, was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm."
A day it was when I could bear
To think, and think, and think again;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And oftentimes I talked to him,
In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race;
The morning sun shone bright and warm;
“Kilve,” said I, “was a pleasant place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

“My little boy, which like you more,”
I said and took him by the arm—
“Our home by Kilve’s delightful shore,
Or here at Liswyn farm?”

“And tell me, had you rather be,”
I said and held him by the arm,
“At Kilve’s smooth shore by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, “At Kilve I’d rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm.”

“Now, little Edward, say why so;
My little Edward, tell me why;”
“I cannot tell, I do not know.”
“Why this is strange,” said I.
“For, here are woods and green-hills warm;
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
“For Kilve by the green sea.”

At this, my boy, so fair and slim,
Hung down his head, nor made reply;
And five times did I say to him,
“Why? Edward, tell me why?”

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And thus to me he made reply;
“At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
“And that’s the reason why.”

Oh dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.
We Are Seven

1 A simple child, dear brother Jim,
2 That lightly draws its breath,
3 And feels its life in every limb,
4 What should it know of death?

5 I met a little cottage girl,
6 She was eight years old, she said;
7 Her hair was thick with many a curl
8 That cluster’d round her head.

9 She had a rustic, woodland air,
10 And she was wildly clad;
11 Her eyes were fair, and very fair,
12 ---Her beauty made me glad.

13 “Sisters and brothers, little maid,
14 “How many may you be?”
15 “How many? seven in all,” she said,
16 And wondering looked at me.

17 “And where are they, I pray you tell?”
18 She answered, “Seven are we,
19 “And two of us at Conway dwell,
20 ‘And two are gone to sea.

We Are Seven. 1798. See WCLB 135. Note by ED as follows:
Composed while walking in the grove at Alfoxden, spring of 1798. Wordsworth met the little girl within the area of Goodrich Castle, 1793. The last stanza was composed first, Wordsworth having begun with the last line. Coleridge threw off the first stanza on Wordsworth’s mentioning the substance of what he wished to be expressed. “I objected to the rhyme ‘dear brother Jim’ as being ludicrous; but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend James T—’s name,”—Fenwick note. The poem was hardly at all altered in the later texts, except that “dear brother Jim” was omitted from the first line, which remains imperfect and rhymeless—

“—A simple child.”
“Two of us in the church-yard lie,
“My sister and my brother,
“And in the church-yard cottage, I
“Dwell near them with my mother.”

“You say that two at Conway dwell,
“And two are gone to sea,
“Yet you are seven; I pray you tell
“Sweet Maid, how this may be?”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“Seven boys and girls are we;
“Two of us in the church-yard lie,
“Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“You run about, my little maid,
“Your limbs they are alive;
“If two are in the church-yard laid,
“Then ye are only five.”

“Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
“And they are side by side.

“My stockings there I often knit,
“My ‘kerchief there I hem;
“And there upon the ground I sit---
“I sit and sing to them.

“And often after sunset, Sir,
“When it is light and fair,
“I take my little porringer,
“And eat my supper there.

“The first that died was little Jane;
“In bed she moaning lay,
“Till God released her of her pain,
“And then she went away.
“So in the church-yard she was laid,
“And all the summer dry,
“Together round her grave we played,
“My brother John and I.

“And when the ground was white with snow,
“And I could run and slide,
“My brother John was forced to go,
“And he lies by her side.”

“How many are you then,” said I,
“If they two are in Heaven?”
The little Maiden did reply,
“O Master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!
“Their spirits are in heaven!”
“Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

“Their spirits are in heaven”
Lines written in Early Spring.

1 I heard a thousand blended notes,
2 While in a grove I sate reclined,
3 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
4 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

5 To her fair works did nature link
6 The human soul that through me ran;
7 And much it griev’d my heart to think
8 What man has made of man.

9 Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,
10 The periwinkle trail’d its wreathes;
11 And ’tis my faith that every flower
12 Enjoys the air it breathes.

13 The birds around me hopp’d and play’d:
14 Their thoughts I cannot measure,
15 But the least motion which they made,
16 It seem’d a thrill of pleasure.

17 The budding twigs spread out their fan,
18 To catch the breezy air;
19 And I must think, do all I can,
20 That there was pleasure there.

21 If I these thoughts may not prevent,
22 If such be of my creed the plan,
23 Have I not reason to lament
24 What man has made of man?

5 nature] Nature \textit{LB}1802, \textit{LB}1805
10 trail’d…wreathes;} trail’d…wreaths; \textit{LB}1805
14 measure,] measure:— \textit{LB}1802, \textit{LB}1805
16 seem’l] seemed \textit{LB}1805

Lines written in Early Spring, 1798. See \textit{WCLB} 138. Note by ED as follows:

“Actually composed [1798] while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden.”—Fenwick note. The only change of importance is in the last stanza, where the awkward first and second lines are replaced by—

“If this belief from heaven be sent.
If such be Nature’s holy plan.”
The Thorn.

I.

1. There is a thorn; it looks so old,
2. In truth you'd find it hard to say,
3. How it could ever have been young,
4. It looks so old and grey.
5. Not higher than a two-years' child,
6. It stands erect this aged thorn;
7. No leaves it has, no thorny points;
8. It is a mass of knotted joints,
10. It stands erect, and like a stone
11. With lichens it is overgrown.

II.

12. Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown
13. With lichens to the very top,
14. And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
15. A melancholy crop:
16. Up from the earth these mosses creep,

The Thorn. March 1798. See WCLB 138. Note by ED as follows:

Written at Alfoxden, 1798. “Arose out of my observing on the ridge of Quantock Hill, on a stormy day, a thorn which I had often past in calm and bright weather, without noticing it. I said to myself ‘Cannot I by some invention, do as much to make this Thorn permanently an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment.’” —Fenwick note. Several changes of text were made. The lines—

“Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.”

were retained until 1815, but in 1820 Wordsworth substituted from them the following—

“Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns, and parching air.”

The lines “Nay rack your brain” (stanza x) to “I'll tell you all I know” (stanza xi) were omitted. The close of stanza xii was made more dignified. “Old Farmer Simpson” became “Grey-haired Wilfred of the Glen.”
And this poor thorn they clasp it round
So close, you’d say that they were bent
With plain and manifest intent,
To drag it to the ground;
And all had joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor thorn for ever.

III.

High on a mountain’s highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale;
Not five yards from the mountain-path,
This thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water, never dry;
I’ve measured it from side to side:
‘Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

IV.

And close beside this aged thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen,
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been,
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.
V.

45 Ah me! what lovely tints are there!
46 Of olive-green and scarlet bright,
47 In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
48 Green, red, and pearly white.
49 This heap of earth o’ergrown with moss,
50 Which close beside the thorn you see,
51 So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
52 Is like an infant’s grave in size
53 As like as like can be:
54 But never, never any where,
55 An infant’s grave was half so fair.

VI.

56 Now would you see this aged thorn,
57 This pond and beauteous hill of moss,
58 You must take care and chuse your time
59 The mountain when to cross.
60 For oft there sits, between the heap
61 That’s like an infant’s grave in size,
62 And that same pond of which I spoke,
63 A woman in a scarlet cloak,
64 And to herself she cries,
65 “Oh misery! oh misery!
66 “Oh woe is me! oh misery!”

VII.

67 At all times of the day and night
68 This wretched woman thither goes,
69 And she is known to every star,
70 And every wind that blows;
71 And there beside the thorn she sits
When the blue day-light’s in the skies,
And when the whirlwind’s on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
“Oh misery! oh misery!
“Oh woe is me! oh misery!”

VIII.

“Now wherefore thus, by day and night,
“In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
“Thus to the dreary mountain-top
“Does this poor woman go?
“And why sits she beside the thorn
“When the blue day-light’s in the sky,
“Or when the whirlwind’s on the hill,
“Or frosty air is keen and still,
“And wherefore does she cry?—
“Oh wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
“Does she repeat that doleful cry?”

IX.

I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows,
But if you’d gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The heap that’s like an infant’s grave,
The pond—and thorn, so old and grey,
Pass by her door—tis seldom shut—
And if you see her in her hut,
Then to the spot away!—
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there.
X.

100  “But wherefore to the mountain-top
101  “Can this unhappy woman go,
102  “Whatever star is in the skies,
103  “Whatever wind may blow?”
104  Nay rack your brain—’tis all in vain,
105  I’ll tell you every thing I know;
106  But to the thorn, and to the pond
107  Which is a little step beyond,
108  I wish that you would go:
109  Perhaps when you are at the place
110  You something of her tale may trace.

XI.

111  I’ll give you the best help I can:
112  Before you up the mountain go,
113  Up to the dreary mountain-top,
114  I’ll tell you all I know.
115  ’Tis now some two and twenty years,
116  Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
117  Gave with a maiden’s true good will
118  Her company to Stephen Hill;
119  And she was blithe and gay,
120  And she was happy, happy still
121  Whene’er she thought of Stephen Hill.

XII.

122  And they had fix’d the wedding-day,
123  The morning that must wed them both;
124  But Stephen to another maid
125  Had sworn another oath;
126  And with this other maid to church
127  Unthinking Stephen went—
128  Poor Martha! on that woeful day

101  woman] Woman LB1802
106  thorn] Thorn LB1802; pond] Pond LB1802
115  two and twenty] two-and-twenty LB1805
124  maid] Maid LB1802
126  maid] Maid LB1802
128  woful] woeful LB1805
A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
Into her bones was sent:
It dried her body like a cinder,
And almost turn'd her brain to tinder.

XIII.

They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer-leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
’Tis said, a child was in her womb,
As now to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad,
Yet often she was sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
Oh me! ten thousand times I’d rather
That he had died, that cruel father!

XIV.

Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas when we talked of this,
Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
That in her womb the infant wrought
About its mother’s heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XV.

No more I know, I wish I did,
And I would tell it all to you;
For what became of this poor child
There’s none that ever knew:
And if a child was born or no,
There’s no one that could ever tell;
The Thorn

161  And if 'twas born alive or dead,
162  There's no one knows, as I have said,
163  But some remember well,
164  That Martha Ray about this time
165  Would up the mountain often climb.

XVI.

166  And all that winter, when at night
167  The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
168  'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
169  The church-yard path to seek:
170  For many a time and oft were heard
171  Cries coming from the mountain-head,
172  Some plainly living voices were,
173  And others, I've heard many swear,
174  Were voices of the dead:
175  I cannot think, whate'er they say,
176  They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVII.

177  But that she goes to this old thorn,
178  The thorn which I've described to you,
179  And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
180  I will be sworn is true.
181  For one day with my telescope,
182  To view the ocean wide and bright,
183  When to this country first I came,
184  Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
185  I climbed the mountain's height:
186  A storm came on, and I could see
187  No object higher than my knee.

XVIII.

188  'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain,
189  No screen, no fence could I discover,
190  And then the wind! in faith, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag, and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain,
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A woman seated on the ground.

XIX.

I did not speak—I saw her face,
Her face it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
“O misery! O misery!”
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go,
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders and you hear her cry,
“Oh misery! oh misery!

XX.

“But what’s the thorn? and what’s the pond?
“And what’s the hill of moss to her?
“And what’s the creeping breeze that comes
“The little pond to stir?”
I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree,
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond,
But all and each agree,
The little babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.
XXI.

221  I’ve heard the scarlet moss is red
222  With drops of that poor infant’s blood;
223  But kill a new-born infant thus!
224  I do not think she could.
225  Some say, if to the pond you go,
226  And fix on it a steady view,
227  The shadow of a babe you trace,
228  A baby and a baby’s face,
229  And that it looks at you;
230  Whene’er you look on it, ’tis plain
231  The baby looks at you again.

XXII.

232  And some had sworn an oath that she
233  Should be to public justice brought;
234  And for the little infant’s bones
235  With spades they would have sought.
236  But then the beauteous hill of moss
237  Before their eyes began to stir;
238  And for full fifty yards around,
239  The grass it shook upon the ground;
240  But all do still aver
241  The little babe is buried there,
242  Beneath that hill of moss so fair.
XXIII.

243  I cannot tell how this may be,
244  But plain it is, the thorn is bound
245  With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
246  To drag it to the ground.
247  And this I know, full many a time,
248  When she was on the mountain high,
249  By day, and in the silent night,
250  When all the stars shone clear and bright,
251  That I have heard her cry,
252  "Oh misery! oh misery!
253  "O woe is me! oh misery!"
The Last of the Flock

I

1 In distant countries have I been,
2 And yet I have not often seen
3 A healthy man, a man full grown,
4 Weep in the public roads, alone.
5 But such a one, on English ground,
6 And in the broad highway, I met;
7 Along the broad highway he came,
8 His cheeks with tears were wet:
9 Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
10 And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II

11 He saw me, and he turned aside,
12 As if he wished himself to hide:
13 And with his coat did then essay
14 To wipe those briny tears away.
15 I followed him, and said, "My friend,
16 What ails you? wherefore weep you so?"
17 —"Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
18 He makes my tears to flow.
19 To-day I fetched him from the rock:
20 He is the last of all my flock.

The Last of the Flock. 1798. See WCLB 141. Note by ED as follows:

Composed, 1798. "The incident," says Wordsworth, "occurred in the village of Holford, close by Alfoxden." The only change of text which need be noted is that the recurring last line of stanzas 6, 7, 8, "For me it was a woeful day," is given only once (in st. 6). The close of st. 7 in the later text is—

"Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past;"

And that of st. 8—

"And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam."
When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed;
They throve, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

Six Children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
'Do this: how can we give to you,'
'They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'
VI

51  I sold a sheep, as they had said,
52  And bought my little children bread,
53  And they were healthy with their food;
54  For me—it never did me good.
55  A woeful time it was for me,
56  To see the end of all my gains,
57  The pretty flock which I had reared
58  With all my care and pains,
59  To see it melt like snow away—
60  For me it was a woeful day.

VII

61  Another still! and still another!
62  A little lamb, and then its mother!
63  It was a vein that never stopped—
64  Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
65  ’Till thirty were not left alive
66  They dwindled, dwindled, one by one;
67  And I may say, that many a time
68  I wished they all were gone—
69  Reckless of what might come at last
70  Were but the bitter struggle past.

VIII

71  To wicked deeds I was inclined,
72  And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
73  And every man I chanced to see,
74  I thought he knew some ill of me:
75  No peace, no comfort could I find,
76  No ease, within doors or without;
77  And, crazily and wearily
78  I went my work about;
79  And oft was moved to flee from home,
80  And hide my head where wild beasts roam.
IX

81 Sir! ’twas a precious flock to me,
82 As dear as my own children be;
83 For daily with my growing store
84 I loved my children more and more.
85 Alas! it was an evil time;
86 God cursed me in my sore distress;
87 I prayed, yet every day I thought
88 I loved my children less;
89 And every week, and every day,
90 My flock it seemed to melt away.

X

91 They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
92 From ten to five, from five to three,
93 A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;—
94 And then at last from three to two;
95 And, of my fifty, yesterday
96 I had but only one:
97 And here it lies upon my arm,
98 Alas! and I have none;—
99 To-day I fetched it from the rock;
100 It is the last of all my flock.”
The Dungeon

1. And this place our forefathers made for man!
2. This is the process of our love and wisdom,
3. To each poor brother who offends against us—
4. Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty?
5. Is this the only cure? Merciful God!
6. Each pore and natural outlet shrivell’d up
7. By ignorance and parching poverty,
8. His energies roll back upon his heart,
9. And stagnate and corrupt; till changed to poison,
10. They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot;
11. Then we call in our pamper’d mountebanks—
12. And this is their best cure! uncomforted

13. And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
14. And savage faces, at the clanking hour
15. Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
16. By the lamp’s dismal twilight! So he lies
17. Circled with evil, till his very soul
18. Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
19. By sights of ever more deformity!

20. With other ministrations thou, O nature!
21. Healest thy wandering and distempered child:
22. Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
23. Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
24. Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
25. Till he relent, and can no more endure
26. To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
27. Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;
28. But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
29. His angry spirit healed and harmonized
30. By the benignant touch of love and beauty.

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The Dungeon, composed by Samuel Coleridge, 1798. Note by ED as follows:

This, like The Foster-Mother’s Tale, is a fragment form Coleridge’s Osorio. It is retained in Remorse, where the soliloquy opens the fifth act of the play.

The Dungeon was omitted from the third edition of 1802 and the fourth edition of 1805.
The Mad Mother.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair,
Her eye-brows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone;
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the green-wood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among;
And it was in the English tongue.

“Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me,
But, safe as in a cradle, here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be,
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

Written at Alfoxden, 1798. “The subject was reported to me by a lady of Bristol, who had seen the poor creature.”—Fenwick note. The title was changed to “Her Eyes are Wild.” The text remained almost unaltered.
Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers press’d.
The breeze I see is in the tree;
It comes to cool my babe and me.

Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother’s only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o’er the sea-rock’s edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie, for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion I will be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I’ll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true ’till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing,
As merry as the birds in spring.
Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest:
'Tis all thine own! and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown;
But thou wilt live with me in love,
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me; thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

Dread not their taunts, my little life!
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stay'd:
From him no harm my babe can take,
But he, poor man! is wretched made,
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

I'll teach my boy the sweetest things;
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost suck'd thy fill.
—Where art thou gone my own dear child?
What wicked looks are those I see?
Alas! alas! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me:
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.
Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
For I thy own dear mother am.
My love for thee has well been tried:
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade,
I know the earth-nuts fit for food;
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid;
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe; we'll live for aye.
The Idiot Boy

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up—the sky is blue,
The owlet in the moonlight air,
He shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your idiot boy?

Beneath the moon that shines so bright,
Till she is tired, let Betty Foy
With girt and stirrup fiddle-faddle;
But wherefore set upon a saddle
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy?

There's scarce a soul that's out of bed;
Good Betty! put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you,
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

Composed almost extempore in the groves at Alfoxden, 1798. Wordsworth says that he never wrote anything with so much glee. "The last stanza, 'The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo, and the sun did shine so cold,' was the foundation of the whole. The words were reported to me by my dear friend Thomas Poole."—Fenwick note. The changes of text are not important. Stanza 3, beginning—

"Beneath the moon that shines so bright,"

and stanza 5—

"The world will say 'tis very idle,"

are omitted after 1820.
The world will say 'tis very idle,
Bethink you of the time of night;
There's not a mother, no not one,
But when she hears what you have done,
Oh! Betty she'll be in a fright.

But Betty's bent on her intent,
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress:
Old Susan lies a bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There's none to help poor Susan Gale,
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her pony, that is mild and good,
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,
And by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has up upon the saddle set,
The like was never heard of yet,
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.
And he must post without delay
Across the bridge that’s in the dale,
And by the church, and o’er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand,
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a hurly-burly now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o’er and o’er has told
The boy who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty’s most especial charge,
Was, “Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,
Come home again, whate’er befal,
“My Johnny do, I pray you do.”

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head, and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too,
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty’s in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the pony’s side,
On which her idiot boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.
But when the pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor idiot boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left-hand you may see,
The green bough's motionless and dead;
The moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship,
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And Betty's standing at the door,
And Betty's face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim;
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her idiot boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He's at the guide-post—he turns right,
She watches till he's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it,
Meek as a lamb the pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.
Away she hies to Susan Gale:
And Johnny’s in a merry tune,
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny’s lips they burr, burr, burr,
And on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree,
For of this pony there’s a rumour,
That should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And when he thinks his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet for his life he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o’er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan’s side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What comfort Johnny soon will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny’s wit and Johnny’s glory.

And Betty’s still at Susan’s side:
By this time she’s not quite so flurried;
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan’s fate
Her life and soul were buried.
But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more,
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well,
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
"As sure as there's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he'll be back again;
"They'll both be here, 'tis almost ten,
"They'll both be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—"If Johnny's near,"
Quoth Betty "he will soon be here,
"As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight,
The moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast;
"A little idle sauntering thing!"
With other names, an endless string,
But now that time is gone and past.
And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
“How can it be he is so late?
“The doctor he has made him wait,
“Susan! they’ll both be here anon.”

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad quandary;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go or she must stay:
—She's in a sad quandary.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his guide
Appear along the moonlight road,
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan she begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drown'd,
Or lost perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, “God forbid it should be true!”
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
“Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

“I must be gone, I must away,
“Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
“Susan, we must take care of him,
“If he is hurt in life or limb”—
“Oh God forbid!” poor Susan cries.

“What can I do?” says Betty, going,
“What can I do to ease your pain?
“Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
“I fear you're in a dreadful way,
“But I shall soon be back again.”
“Good Betty go, good Betty go,
There’s nothing that can ease my pain.”
Then off she hies, but with a prayer
That God poor Susan’s life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green,
’Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where.

She’s past the bridge that’s in the dale,
And now the thought torments her sore,
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon that’s in the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

And now she’s high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There’s neither Johnny nor his horse,
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There’s neither doctor nor his guide.

“Oh saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he’s climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gypsey-folk.
“Or him that wicked pony’s carried
To the dark cave, the goblins’ hall,
Or in the castle he’s pursuing,
Among the ghosts, his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall.”

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
“If Susan had not been so ill,
“Alas! I should have had him still,
“My Johnny, till my dying day.”

Poor Betty! in this sad distemper,
The doctor’s self would hardly spare,
Unworthy things she talked and wild,
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The pony had his share.

And now she’s got into the town,
And to the doctor’s door she hies;
’Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she’s at the doctor’s door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap,
The doctor at the casement shews,
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze;
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

“Oh Doctor! Doctor! where’s my Johnny?”
“I’m here, what is’t you want with me?”
“Oh Sir! you know I’m Betty Foy,
“And I have lost my poor dear boy,
“You know him—him you often see;

pony’s) Pony’s LB1802, LB1805
pony] Pony LB1802, LB1805
doctor’s] Doctor’s LB1802, LB1805
doctor] Doctor LB1802; doctor at the casement shews] Doctor at the casement shows LB1805
doze] dose LB1802, LB1805
Betty] betty LB1802
boy] Boy LB1802, LB1805
"He's not so wise as some folks be,"
"The devil take his wisdom!" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
“What, woman! should I know of him?”
And, grumbling, he went back to bed.

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
"Here will I die; here will I die;
“I thought to find my Johnny here,
“But he is neither far nor near,
“Oh! what a wretched mother I!”

She stops, she stands, she looks about,
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail,
This piteous news so much it shock’d her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she’s high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road,
“Oh cruel! I’m almost three-score;
“Such night as this was ne’er before,
“There’s not a single soul abroad.”

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now if e’er you can.

woman! Woman! LB1802, LB1805
mother! Mother LB1802, LB1805
shock’d! shocked LB1805
three-score! three score LB1800; threescore LB1802, LB1805
The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers, yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin;
A green-grown pond she just has pass’d,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
“Oh dear, dear pony! my sweet joy!
“Oh carry back my idiot boy!
“And we will ne’er o’erload thee more.”

A thought is come into her head;
“The pony he is mild and good,
“And we have always used him well;
“Perhaps he’s gone along the dell,
“And carried Johnny to the wood.”

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be,
To drown herself therein.

Oh reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his horse are doing!
What they’ve been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

...
Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he’s turned himself about,
His face unto his horse’s tail,
And still and mute, in wonder lost,
All like a silent horseman-ghost,
He travels on along the vale.

And now, perhaps, he’s hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he!
Yon valley, that’s so trim and green,
In five months’ time, should he be seen,
A desart wilderness will be.

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He’s galloping away, away,
And so he’ll gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil.

I to the muses have been bound,
These fourteen years, by strong indentures;
Oh gentle muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befel,
For sure he met with strange adventures.

Oh gentle muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me?
Ye muses! whom I love so well.

327  pony] Pony LB1802, LB1805
335  horseman-ghost] Horseman-Ghost LB1802, LB1805
347  muses] Muses LB1802, LB1805
349  muses] Muses LB1802, LB1805
351  For sure he] He surely LB1802, LB1805
352  muses] Muses LB1802, LB 805
356  muses] Muses LB1802, LB1805
Who's you, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse, that's feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read,
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very pony too.
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring water-fall she hears,
And cannot find her idiot boy.

Your pony's worth his weight in gold,
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now, all full in view, she sees
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

And Betty sees the pony too:
Why stand you thus Good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your idiot boy.
382 She looks again—her arms are up—
383 She screams—she cannot move for joy;
384 She darts as with a torrent’s force,
385 She almost has o’erturned the horse,
386 And fast she holds her idiot boy.

387 And Johnny burrs and laughs aloud,
388 Whether in cunning or in joy,
389 I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
390 Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs,
391 To hear again her idiot boy.

392 And now she’s at the pony’s tail,
393 And now she’s at the pony’s head,
394 On that side now, and now on this,
395 And almost stifled with her bliss,
396 A few sad tears does Betty shed.

397 She kisses o’er and o’er again,
398 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy,
399 She’s happy here, she’s happy there,
400 She is uneasy every where;
401 Her limbs are all alive with joy.

402 She pats the pony, where or when
403 She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
404 The little pony glad may be,
405 But he is milder far than she,
406 You hardly can perceive his joy.

407 “Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
408 “You’ve done your best, and that is all.”
409 She took the reins, when this was said,
410 And gently turned the pony’s head
411 From the loud water-fall.
By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The pony, Betty, and her boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale:
And who is she, be-times abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long Susan lay deep lost in thought,
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her messenger and nurse;
And as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body it grew better.

She turned, she toss’d herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

“Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured,
“I’ll to the wood.”—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she posts up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come,
She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting,
As ever was in Christendom.
442 The owls have hardly sung their last,
443 While our four travellers homeward wend;
444 The owls have hooted all night long,
445 And with the owls began my song,
446 And with the owls must end.

447 For while they all were travelling home,
448 Cried Betty, “Tell us Johnny, do,
449 “Where all this long night you have been,
450 “What you have heard, what you have seen,
451 “And Johnny, mind you tell us true.”

452 Now Johnny all night long had heard
453 The owls in tuneful concert strive;
454 No doubt too he the moon had seen;
455 For in the moonlight he had been
456 From eight o’clock till five.

457 And thus to Betty’s question, he
458 Made answer, like a traveller bold,
459 (His very words I give to you,)
460 “The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
461 “And the sun did shine so cold.”
462 ---Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
463 And that was all his travel’s story.
Lines
written near Richmond, upon the Thames,
at Evening.

1  How rich the wave, in front, imprest
2   With evening-twilight's summer hues,
3   While, facing thus the crimson west,
4   The boat her silent path pursues!
5   And see how dark the backward stream!
6   A little moment past, so smiling!
7   And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
8   Some other loiterer beguiling.

9   Such views the youthful bard allure,
10  But, heedless of the following gloom,
11  He deems their colours shall endure
12   'Till peace go with him to the tomb.
13  —And let him nurse his fond deceit,
14  And what if he must die in sorrow!
15  Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
16  Though grief and pain may come to-morrow?

17  Glide gently, thus for ever glide,
18  O Thames! that other bards may see,
19  As lovely visions by thy side
20  As now, fair river! come to me.
21  Oh glide, fair stream! for ever so;
22  Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
23   'Till all our minds for ever flow,
24   As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Title LINES WRITTEN NEAR RICHMOND, UPON THE THAMES, AT EVENING] LINES Written near Richmond upon the Thames. LB1800; REMEMBRANCE of COLLINS, Written upon the Thames, near Richmond.] REMEMBRANCE of COLLINS, Written upon the Thames near Richmond. LB1802, LB1805

1-8  del LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
9-16 del LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
18  bards] Bards LB1802, LB1805
20  river] River LB1802, LB1805
21  stream] Stream LB1802, LB1805
23  'Till] Till LB1805

LINES WRITTEN NEAR RICHMOND... 1789. See WCLB 144. Note by ED as follows:

This poem, composed in 1789, actually belongs to the Cam, although the imagined scene is the Thames near Richmond. It was afterwards broken into two short poems, the first two stanzas forming that entitled "Lines written while sailing in a boat at evening," the last three forming that entitled "Remembrance of Collins." There are several changes of text which effect improvements in detail.
Vain thought! yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such heart did once the poet bless,
Who, pouring here a *later ditty,
Gould find no refuge from distress,
But in the milder grief of pity.

Remembrance! as we glide along,
For him suspend the dashing oar,
And pray that never child of Song
May know his freezing sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest powers attended.

Wordsworth's footnote as follows: “* Collin's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his lifetime. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.”
“Expostulation and Reply”

“Why William, on that old grey stone,
“Thus for the length of half a day,
“Why William, sit you thus alone,
“And dream your time away?

“Where are your books? that light bequeath’d
“To beings else forlorn and blind!
“Up! Up! and drink the spirit breath’d
“From dead men to their kind.

“You look round on your mother earth,
“As if she for no purpose bore you;
“As if you were her first-born birth,
“And none had lived before you!”

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply.

“The eye it cannot chuse but see,
“We cannot bid the ear be still;
“Our bodies feel, where’er they be,
“Against, or with our will.

“Nor less I deem that there are powers,
“Which of themselves our minds impress,
“That we can feed this mind of ours,
“In a wise passiveness.

---

Expostulation and Reply. Spring 1798. See WCLB 145. Note by ED as follows:
Composed at Alfoxden, in the spring of 1798. The text remains unchanged in the later editions.
“Think you, mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.”
The Tables Turned;
AN EVENING SCENE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

1 Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks,
2 Why all this toil and trouble?
3 Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
4 Or surely you’ll grow double.

5 The sun above the mountain’s head,
6 A freshening lustre mellow,
7 Through all the long green fields has spread,
8 His first sweet evening yellow.

9 Books! ’tis a dull and endless strife,
10 Come, hear the woodland linnet,
11 How sweet his music; on my life
12 There’s more of wisdom in it.

13 And hark! how blithe the thrrostle sings!
14 And he is no mean preacher;
15 Come forth into the light of things,
16 Let Nature be your teacher.

17 She has a world of ready wealth,
18 Our minds and hearts to bless—
19 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
20 Truth breathed by cheerfulness.
One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man;
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things;
—We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;
Close up these barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.
The little hedge-row birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression; every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought—he is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten, one to whom
Long patience has such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing, of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy, what the old man hardly feels.
—I asked him whither he was bound, and what
That he was going many miles to take
“A last leave of my son, a mariner,
“Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
“And there is dying in an hospital.”

Title revised to Animal Tranquillity and Decay ... LB1800, LB1802, and LB1805
10 has] hath LB1805
14 old man] Old Man LB1802, LB1805
17 “Sir! I am] That he was LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
18 my son, a mariner] his son, a mariner, LB1800; his Son, a Mariner, LB1802, LB1805
19 has] had LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
20 dying] lying LB1800

Old Man Traveling; Animal Tranquillity and Decay. 1798. See WCLB 147. ED notes as follows:
Composed, 1798. “If I recollect right,” says Wordsworth, “these verses were an overflow from the ‘Old Cumberland Beggar.’” The first part of the title (“Old Man Traveling”) was omitted. In the later texts the last six lines were omitted. [ED’s attribution in last sentence not confirmed in LB1800-1805. —WKC]
The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman

[Wordsworth's headnote: “When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions; he is left behind, covered over with Deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the Desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other Tribes of Indians. It is unnecessary to add that the females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne’s Journey from Hudson’s Bay to the Northern Ocean. When the Northern Lights, as the same writer informs us, vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise. This circumstance is alluded to in the first stanza of the following poem.”]

The Complaint, &c

1 Before I see another day,
2 Oh let my body die away!
3 In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
4 The stars they were among my dreams;
5 In sleep did I behold the skies,
6 I saw the crackling flashes drive;
7 And yet they are upon my eyes,
8 And yet I am alive.
9 Before I see another day,
10 Oh let my body die away!

Headnote: Desart; ] ...Desert; LB 1805
...It is unnecessary to add that the females] ...The females; LB 1802, LB 1805
When the Northern Lights, as the same writer informs us, vary] In the high Northern Latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the Northern Lights vary; LB 1800, LB 1802, LB 1805.

The Complaint, &c. 1798. See WCLB 147. Note by ED as follows:
In stanza I the fifth and sixth lines were changed to –

“In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive.”

In stanza 4 the line –

“A most strange something I did see”

became –

“A most strange working did I see.”
My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain.
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie;
Alone I cannot fear to die.

Alas! you might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon despair o’er me prevailed;
Too soon my heartless spirit failed;
When you were gone my limbs were stronger,
And Oh how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
My friends, when you were gone away.

My child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange something did I see;
--As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me.
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a little child.
41 My little joy! my little pride!
42 In two days more I must have died.
43 Then do not weep and grieve for me;
44 I feel I must have died with thee.
45 Oh wind that o’er my head art flying,
46 The way my friends their course did bend,
47 I should not feel the pain of dying,
48 Could I with thee a message send.
49 Too soon, my friends, you went away;
50 For I had many things to say.

51 I’ll follow you across the snow,
52 You travel heavily and slow:
53 In spite of all my weary pain,
54 I’ll look upon your tents again.
55 My fire is dead, and snowy white
56 The water which beside it stood;
57 The wolf has come to me to-night,
58 And he has stolen away my food.
59 For ever left alone am I,
60 Then wherefore should I fear to die?

61 My journey will be shortly run,
62 I shall not see another sun,
63 I cannot lift my limbs to know
64 If they have any life or no.
65 My poor forsaken child! if I
66 For once could have thee close to me,
67 With happy heart I then would die,
68 And my last thoughts would happy be.
69 I feel my body die away,
70 I shall not see another day.

46 friends] Friends LB 1802, LB 1805
49 friends] Friends LB 1802, LB 1805
55 My] —My LB 1802, LB 1805
67 would] should LB 1800, LB 1802, LB 1805
The Convict

1. The glory of evening was spread through the west;
   – On the slope of a mountain I stood;
2. While the joy that precedes the calm season of rest
   Rang loud through the meadow and wood.
3. “And must we then part from a dwelling so fair?”
   In the pain of my spirit I said,
4. And with a deep sadness I turned, to repair
   To the cell where the convict is laid.

5. The thick-ribbed walls that o’ershadow the gate
   Resound; and the dungeons unfold:
6. I pause; and at length, through the glimmering grate,
   That outcast of pity behold.
7. His black matted head on his shoulder is bent,
   And deep is the sigh of his breath,
8. And with stedfast dejection his eyes are intent
   On the fetters that link him to death.
9. ‘Tis sorrow enough on that visage to gaze.
   That body dismiss’d from his care;
10. Yet my fancy has pierced to his heart, and pourtrays
    More terrible images there.
11. His bones are consumed, and his life-blood is dried,
    With wishes the past to undo;
12. And his crime, through the pains that o’erwhelm him, descried,
    Still blackens and grows on his view.
13. When from the dark synod, or blood-reeking field,
    To his chamber the monarch is led,
14. All soothers of sense their soft virtue shall yield,
    And quietness pillow his head.

*The Convict.* Date unknown, c. 1793-1797. See *WCLB* 148-9. Note by ED as follows:

This poem was omitted by Wordsworth from all subsequent editions.
But if grief, self-consumed, in oblivion would doze,
And conscience her tortures appease,
'Mid tumult and uproar this man must repose;
In the comfortless vault of disease.

When his fetters at night have so press'd on his limbs,
That the weight can no longer be borne,
If, while a half-slumber his memory bedims,
The wretch on his pallet should turn,

While the jail-mastiff howls at the dull clanking chain,
From the roots of his hair there shall start
A thousand sharp punctures of cold-sweating pain,
And terror shall leap at his heart.

But now he half-raises his deep-sunken eye,
And the motion unsettles a tear;
The silence of sorrow it seems to supply,
And asks of me why I am here.

"Poor victim! no idle intruder has stood
"With o'erweening complacence our state to compare,
"But one, whose first wish is the wish to be good,
"Is come as a brother thy sorrows to share.

"At thy name though compassion her nature resign,
"Though in virtue's proud mouth thy report be a stain,
"My care, if the arm of the mighty were mine,
"Would plant thee where yet thou might'st blossom again."
Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey,
On revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour,
July 13, 1798

1 Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
2 Of five long winters! and again I hear
3 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
4 With a sweet inland murmur.* —Once again
5 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
6 Which on a wild secluded scene impress
7 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
8 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
9 The day is come when I again repose
10 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
11 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
12 Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
13 Among the woods and copses lose themselves,
14 Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
15 The wild green landscape. Once again I see
16 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
17 Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms

Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey. July 1798. See WCLB 149. Note by ED as follows:
Composed, 1798. “I began it,” says Wordsworth, “upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my Sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol.” The only noteworthy change of text is in ll. 13-15—

“Among the woods and copses lose themselves,
Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
The wild green landscape,”

For which the final text reads—

“Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
‘Mid groves and copses.”

The earlier visit to the Wye was that of 1793, which followed Wordsworth’s wanderings on Salisbury Plain. See note on “The Female Vagrant.”

Wordsworth’s footnote: “* The river is affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.”
Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
And the low copses—coming from the trees
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit’s cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been to me,
As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
As may have had no trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man’s life;
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lighten’d:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless day-light; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish’d thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o’er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led; more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by),
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,*
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor, perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; ’tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform

---

93 Not] Not LB1800, LB1802, LB1805
107 half-create] half create LB1800, LB1802, LB1805

107 Wordsworth’s footnote: “* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.”
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e’er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,
If I should be, where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake.
Appendix
LYRICAL BALLADS,

WITH

A FEW OTHER POEMS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. & A. ARCH, GRACECHURCH-STREET.
1798.
It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favourable to the author’s wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our own pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed; it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended, that more conversant the reader is with our elder writers, and with those in modern times who have been the most successful in painting manners and passions, the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make.

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. The poem of the Thorn, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author’s own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere was professedly written in imitation of the style, as well as the spirit of the elder poets; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries. The lines entitled Expostulation and Reply, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.
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