A SELECTION OF
ENGLISH
POEMS

for
G. C. E.
Advanced Level
(from 1986)
A Selection of English Poems

for the
G.C.E. Advanced Level
Examination
(from 1986)

EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT
PREFACE

This book 'A Selection of English Poems' contains the poems that candidates offering English at G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination are required to study from 1986, onwards. These poems were selected by the Advisory Committee for English, appointed by the Ministry of Education. The following members served on the Advisory Committee—

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I offer my sincere thanks to all those who participated in the compilation and printing of this book.

M. K. J. A. Alwis
Commissioner,
Educational Publications Department.
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I

‘LOVE GUARDS THE ROSES OF THY LIPS’

Love guards the roses of thy lips
    And flies about them like a bee;
If I approach he forward skips,
    And if I kiss he stingeth me.

Love in thine eyes doth build his bower,
    And sleeps within his pretty shrine;
And if I look the boy will lower,
    And from their orbs shoot shafts divine.

Love works thy heart within his fire,
    And in my tears doth firm the same;
And if I tempt it will retire,
    And of my plaints doth make a game.

Love, let me cull her choicest flowers;
    And pity me, and calm her eye;
Make soft her heart, dissolve her lowers;
    Then will I praise thy deity.

But if thou do not, Love, I’ll truly serve her
In spite of thee, and by firm faith deserve her.

Thomas Lodge
II

IT WAS A LOVER AND HIS LASS

(From 'As You Like It')

It was a lover and his lass,
   With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino.
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
   In the spring time, the only pretty ring time
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
   Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
   With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
   In the spring time, &c.

This carol they began that hour,
   With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower
   In the spring time, &c.

And therefore take the present time,
   With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino
For love is crowned with the prime
   In the spring time, &c.

William Shakespeare

III

'O MISTRESS MINE WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING'

(From 'Twelfth Night')

O mistress mine! where are you roaming?
O! stay and hear; your true love's coming.
That can sing both high and low,
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
   Every wise man's son doth know.

What is Love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty.
   Youth's a stuff will not endure.

William Shakespeare
IV

"THERE IS A GARDEN....."

There is a garden in her face,
Where rose and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow,
There cherries grow which none can buy,
Till 'Cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow.
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,
Till 'Cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still,
Her brows like bended bows do stand
Threating with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to some nigh,
Till 'Cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.

Thomas Campion

V

BLAME NOT MY CHEEKS, THOUGH PALE WITH LOVE THEY BE

Blame not my cheeks, though pale with love they be;
The kindly heat unto my heart is flown,
'To cherish it that is dismayed by thee,
Who art so cruel and unsteadfast grown;
For Nature called by distressed hearts,
Neglects and quite forsakes the outward parts.

But they whose cheeks with careless blood are stained,
Nurse not one spark of love within their hearts;
And, when they woo, they speak with passion feigned,
For their fat love lies in their outward parts;
But in their breasts, where Love his court should hold,
Poor Cupid sits and blows his nails for cold.

Thomas Campion
VI

'ROSE-CHEEKED LAURA COME'

Rose-cheeked Laura, come;
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's
Silent music, either other;
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From concord divinely framed;
Heaven is music, and thy beauty's
Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them,
Only beauty purely loving
Knows no discord.

But still moves delight,
Like clear springs renewed by flowing,
Ever perfect, ever in themselves eternal.

Thomas Campion

VII

SONG

Sweetest love, I do not goe,
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter Love for me?

But since that I
Must dye at last, 'tis best, it is
To use myself in jest
Thus by fain'd deaths to dye;

Yesternight the Sunne went hence,
And yet is here to day,
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way:
Then feareth mee,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurreth than hee.

O how feeble is mans power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add, another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall!

But come bad chance,
And wee joyne to 'tis our strength,
And wee teach art and length,
It selfe o'ers us to advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not winde,
But sigh'st my soule away,
When thou weep'st, unkindly kinde,
My lifes blood doth decay.

It cannot bee
That thou lov'st mee, as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
Thou art the best of mee.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethinke me any ill,
Destiny may take thy part,
And may thy feares fulfill;
But thinke that wee
Are but turn'd aside to sleepe;
They who one another kepe
Alive, ne'er parted bee.

John Donne
A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

AS virtuous men passe mildly away,
    And whisper to their soules, to goe,
Whilst some of their sad friends doe say,
    The breath goes now, and some say, no:
So let us melt, and make no noise,
    No teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
T'were prophanation of our joyes
    To tell the layetie our love.
Moving of th'earth brings harmses and feares,
    Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheares,
    Though greater farre, is innocent.
Dull sublunary lovers love
    (Whose soule is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
    Those things which elemented it.
But we by a love, so much refin'd,
    That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
    Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.
Our two soules therefore, which are one,
    Though I must goe, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
    Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.
If they be two, they are two so
    As stiffe twin compasses are two,
Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show
    To move, but doth, if the other doe.
And though it in the center sit,
    Yet when the other far doth rome,
It leans, and hearken after it,
    And growes erect, as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to mee, who must
    Like th'other foot, obliquely runne;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
    And makes me end, where I begunne.

John Donne

THE SUNNE RISING

Busie old foole unruly Sunne,
    Why dost thou thus,
Through windowes, and through curtaine call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?
    Sawey pedantiq wretch, goe chide,
Late schoole boyes, and sowre prentices,
Goe tell Court-huntsmen, that the King will ride,
    Call countrey ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no season knowes, nor clyme,
Nor houres, dayes, moneths, which are the rags of time.

    Thy beames, so reverend, and strong
    Why shouldst thou thinke?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke,
    But that I would not lose her sight so long:
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
    Looke, and to morrow late, tell mee,
Whether both the India's of spice and Myne
    Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with mee.
Ask for those Kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
    And thou shalt heare, All here in one bed lay.

She is all States, and all Princes, I,
    Nothing else is.
Princes doe but play us; compar'd to this,
    All honor's mimique: All wealth alchimie.
Thou sunne art halfe as happy' as wee,
    In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties bee
    To warme the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art every where;
This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphare.

John Donne
X

DEATH BE NOT PROUD, THOUGH SOME HAVE CALLED THEE

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And sooner our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings and desperate men,
And dost with poyson, warre, and sickness dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
And better then thy stroake; why swell'st thou then;
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

John Donne

XI

BATTER MY HEART, THREE PERSON'D GOD; FOR, YOU

Batter my heart, three person'd God; for, you
As yet knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.
I, like an usurpt towne, to'another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend.
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.
Yet dearely I love you, 'and would be loved faine.
But am betroth'd unto your enemie:
Divorce mee, 'untie, or breake that knot againe;
Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chast, except you ravish mee.
Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding Ages curst.
For close Designs and crooked Counsels fit.
Sagacious, Bold, and Turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfixed in Principles and Place,
In Pow'r unpleased, impatient of Disgrace;
A fiery Soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay:
And o'er informed the Tenement of Clay.
A daring Pilot in extremity;
Pleas'd with the Danger, when the Waves went high.
He sought the Storms; but, for a Calm unfit,
Would Steer too nigh the Sands to boast his Wit.
Great Wits are sure to Madness near all'd
And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide;
Else, why should he, with Wealth and Honour blest,
Refuse his Age the needful hours of Rest?
Punish a Body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of Life, yet Prodigal of Ease?

John Dryden

Some of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land;
In the first Rank of these did Zimri stand:
A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all Mankind's Epitome.
Stiff in Opinions, always in the wrong;
Was every thing by starts, and Nothing long:
But, in the course of one revolving Moon,
Was Chymist, Fidler, States-man, and Buffoon;
Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming,
Drinking,
Besides ten thousand Freaks that died in thinking.
Blest Madman, who cou'd every hour employ,
With something New to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising, were his usual Theems;
And both (to chew his Judgement) in Extreems:
So over Violent, or over Civil
That every Man, with him, was God or Devil.
In squandering Wealth was his peculiar Art;
Nothing went unrewarded but Desert.
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late:
He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.

John Dryden
THE PORTRAIT OF OG
FROM "ABSALOM AND A HITOPHEL"

Now stop your noses Readers all and some,
For here's a tun of Midnight work to come.
Og from a Treason Tavern rolling home.
Round as a Globe, and Liquored ev'ry chink.
Godly and Great he Sails behind his link;
With all his Bulk there's nothing lost in Og.
For ev'ry inch that is not Fool is Rogue;
A Monstrous mass of foul corrupted matter.
As all the Devils had spew'd to make the batter.

When wine has given him courage to Blaspheme,
He curses God, but God before us'thur him;
And if man could have reason, none has more.
That made his Paunch so rich and him so poor.
With wealth he was not trusted, for Heav'n knew
What 'twas of Old to pamper up a Jew;
To what would he on Quail and Pheasant swell,
That ev'n on Tripes and Carrius cou'd rebel?
But though Heaven made him poor, (with rev'rence speaking).
He never was a Poet of God's making;
The Midwife laid her hand on his Thick Skull.

With this Prophetick blessing — Be thou Dull
Drink, Swear, and Roar, forbear no lewd delight.
Fit for thy Bulk, doe anything but write.
Thou art of lasting Make, like thoughtless men
A strong Nativity—but for the Pen;
Eat Opium mingle Arsenick in thy Drink.
Still thou mayst live avoiding Pen and Ink.
I see, I see, 'tis Counsel given in vain.
For Treason botched in Rhime will be thy bane;
Rhime is the Rock on which thou art to wreck
'Tis fatal to thy Fame and to thy Neck.

John Dryden

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills.
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves besides them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood.
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth
XVI

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
   Beside the springs of Dove.
A Maid whom there were none to praise,
   And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
   Half-hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
   Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
   When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
   The difference to me!

William Wordsworth

XVII

EARTH HAS NOT ANYTHING TO SHOW MORE FAIR

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

William Wordsworth
XVIII

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself:
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands:
Of travellers in some shady haunt.
Among the Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird.
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay.
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

What'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending:
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened, motionless and still;
And as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

William Wordsworth

XIX

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course.
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

William Wordsworth
XX

THE LOTOS-EATERS

‘Courage!’ he said, and pointed toward the land, This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon’. In the afternoon they came unto a land In which it seemed always afternoon. All round the coast the languid air did swoon, Breathing like one that hath a weary dream; Full-faced above the valley stood the moon, And like a downward smoke, the slender stream Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go; And some thro’ wavering lights and shadows broke, Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below. They saw the gleaming river seaward flow From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops Three silent pinnacles of aged snow. Stood sunset-flush’d; and, dew’d with showery drops, Up-climb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger’d low adown In the red West: thro’ mountain clefts the dale Was seen far inland, and the yellow down Border’d with palm, and many a winding vale And meadow, set with slender galangale; A land where all things always seem’d the same! And round about the keel with faces pale, Dark faces pale against that rosy flame, The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem, Laden with flower and fruit whereof they gave To each, but whoso did receive of them, And taste, to him the gushing of the wave Far far away did seem to mourn and rave On alien shores; and if his fellow spake, His voice was thin, as voices from the grave; And deep-asleep he seem’d, yet all awake, And music in his ears, his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand, Between the sun and moon upon the shore: And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland, Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar, Weary the wandering fields of barren foam. Then someone said, ‘We will return no more’: And all at once they sang, ‘Our island home Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam’.

Chor’el Song

There is sweet music here that softer falls Than petals from blown roses on the grass. Or night-dews on still waters between walls Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass: Music that gentler on the spirit lies. Than tir’d eyelids upon tir’d eyes; Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep, And thro’ the moss the ivies creep, And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Why are we weigh’d upon with heaviness, And utterly consumed with sharp distress, While all things else have rest from weariness? All things have rest; why should we toil alone, We only toil, who are the first of things, And make perpetual moan,

Still from one sorrow to another thrown: Nor ever fold our wings, And cease from wanderings, Nor steep our brows in slumber’s holy balm; Nor harken what the inner spirit sings, There is no joy but calm!

Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

Lot! in the middle of the wood, The folded leaf is woo’d from out the bud With winds upon the branch, and there Grows green and broad, and takes no care. Sun-steep’d at noon, and in the moon Nightly dew-fed and turning yellow Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All is allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease;
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful
case.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray:
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory.
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearts are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold

Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death.
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long Labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wards,
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

But, propp'd on beds of amaranth and moly,—
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropp'd eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the hewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a vow'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hallow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
Is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge
was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains
in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly
curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps
and fiery sands,
Changing lights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whisper'd —
down in hell.
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and
oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Lord Tennyson
XXII

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call or me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell.
When I embark:

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Lord Tennyson
XXIII

PRELUDES

I

The winter evening settles down
With smell of steaks in passageways,
Six o’clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about your feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps,
And then the lighting of the lamps.

II

The morning comes to consciousness
Of faint stale smells of beer
From the sawdust-trampled street
With all its muddy feet that press
To early coffee-stands.
With the other masquerades
That time resumes,
One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms.

III

You tossed a blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back, and waited;
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted;
They flickered against the ceiling
And when all the world came back
And the light crept up between the shutters
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
You had such a vision of the street
As the street hardly understands;
Sitting along the bed’s edge, where

You curled the papers from your hair.
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet
In the palms of both soiled hands.

IV

His soul stretched tight across the skies
That fade behind a city block,
Or trampled by insistent feet
At four and five and six o’clock;
And short square fingers stuffing pipes.
And evening newspapers, and eyes
Assured of certain certainties,
The conscience of a blackened street
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling:
The notion of some infinitely gentle
Ininitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh
The worlds revolve like ancient women
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

T. S. Eliot
XXIV

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens.
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

T. S. Eliot

XXV

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE
(O quam te memorem virgo..........)

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair —
Lean on a garden urn——
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair —
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise——
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes;
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,
So I would have had her stand and grieve,
So he would have left
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,
As the mind deserts the body it has used.
I should find
Some way incomparably light and deft.
Some way we both should understand
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days,
Many days and many hours;
Her hair over her arm and her arm full of flowers
And I wonder how they should have been together!
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze
The troubled midnight and the noon’s repose.

T. S. Eliot
XXVI

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

'A cold coming we had of it
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp.
The very dead of winter'.
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters.
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night.
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the
darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel.
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver.
And feet treading the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place: it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and
death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.