

A SELECTION OF  
ENGLISH  
POEMS

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

492.1  
Sel  
SL/PR

EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

***A Selection of English Poems***

for the

G.C.E. Advanced Level

Examination

(from 1986)

**EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT**

First Published 1983  
Reprinted 1987  
Reprinted 1990  
Reprinted 1991  
Second Reprint 1991  
Copyright Reserved.

## 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—

Professor Ranjan Goonatillake, University of Kelaniya  
Associate Professor Thiru Kandiah, University of Peradeniya  
Dr. Mrs. Siromi Fernando, University of Colombo  
Mrs. Chandra Amarasekara, Technical College, Maradana  
Mrs. Indrani Seneviratne, Royal College, Colombo  
Mr. S. Hettiarachchi, Kingswood College, Kandy  
Mr. Nihal G. Cooray, C.D.C. Colombo.

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.

Educational Publications Department,  
New Secretariat,  
Maligawatta,  
Colombo 10.  
1987-06-10.

## CONTENTS

<i>Thomas Lodge</i> (1618 - 1658)			
"Love guards the roses of thy lips"	...	1	
<i>William Shakespeare</i> (1564 - 1616)			
✓"It was a lover and his lass....."	... }	2	
✓"O mistress mine where are you roaming"	... }	3	
<i>Thomas Campion</i> (1567 - 1620)			
✓"There is a garden in her face"	... ..	4	
"Blame not my cheeks though pale with love they be"	... ..	5	
✓"Rose - cheeked Laura come"	... ..	6	
<i>John Donne</i> (1572 - 1631)			
✓Song: "Sweetest love I do not goe"	... ..	7	
A Valediction forbidding mourning	... ..	8	
The Sunne Rising	... ..	9	
"Death be not proud"	... ..	10	
"Batter my heart three person'd God"	... ..	11	
<i>John Dryden</i> (1618 - 1658)			
The Portrait of Achitophel — From "Absalom and Achitophel"	12		
The Portrait of Zimri — From "Absalom and Achitophel"	13		
The Portrait of Og — From "Absalom and Achitophel"	14		
<i>William Wordsworth</i> (1770 - 1850)			
"I wandered lonely as a cloud"	... ..	15	
"She dwelt among the untrodden ways"	... ..	16	
"Earth has not anything to show more fair"	... ..	17	
The Solitary Reaper	... ..	18	
"A slumber did my spirit seal"	... ..	19	
<i>Alfred Tennyson (Lord)</i> (1809 - 1892)			
The Lotus Eaters	... ..	20	
Tithonus	... ..	25	
Crossing the Bar	... ..	27	
<i>Thomas Stearns Eliot</i> (1888 - 1965)			
Preludes	... ..	28	
Morning at the Window	... ..	30	
La figlia che Piange	... ..	31	
Journey of the Magi	... ..	32	

# 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 roses 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  
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill  
All that attempt with eye or hand  
Those sacred cherries to come 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 concert 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 them-  
selves 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 mee;  
But since that I  
Must dye at last, 'tis best, <sup>it is</sup>  
To use my selfe in jest <sup>for</sup>  
Thus by fain'd deaths to dye;  
<sup>ye</sup>esternight the Sunne went hence,  
And yet is here to day,  
He hath no desire nor sense,  
Nor halfe so short a way:  
Then feare not mee,  
But beleve that I shall make  
Speedier journeyes, since I take  
More wings and spurres than hee.

O how feeble is mans power,  
That if good fortune fall,  
Cannot adde, another houre,  
Nor a lost houre recall!  
But come bad chance,  
And wee joyne to 'it our strength,  
And wee teach it art and length,  
It selfe o'e 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 fulfil;  
But thinke that wee  
Are but turn'd aside to sleepe;  
They who one another keepe  
Alive, ne'er parted bee.

*John Donne*



## VIII

### 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 layetic our love.  
Moving of th'earth brings harmes 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 leanes, and hearkens 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

## IX

### THE SUNNE RISING

Busie old foole unruly Sunne,  
Why dost thou thus,  
Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?  
Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?  
Sawcy pedantique wretch, goe chide *bid*  
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 spicē 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's 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 askes 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 spheare.

John Donne

## X

### DEATH BE NOT PROUD, THOUGH SOME HAVE CALLED THEE

Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadfull, 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 soonest 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 sicl nesse 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 enemy:  
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 chaste, except you ravish mee.

## XII

### THE PORTRAIT OF ACHITOPHEL

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

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, unfixt in Principles and Place,  
In Pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of Disgrace;  
A fiery Soul, which working out its way,  
Fretted the Figmy Body to decay:  
And o'r 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 alli'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*

## XIII

### THE PORTRAIT OF ZIMRI

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

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 could every hour employ,  
With something New to wish, or to enjoy!  
Railing and praising, were his usual Theams;  
And both (to shew his Judgement) in Extreame:  
So over Violent, or over Civil  
That every Man, with him, was God or Devil.  
In squandring Wealth was his peculiar Art;  
Nothing went unrewarded but Desert.  
Beggard by fools, whom still he found too  
late:  
He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.

*John Dryden*

## XIV

### 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.  
 Goodly 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 Curst 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 Tripe and Carrion 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 lew'd  
     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 botcht 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

## XV

### I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

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 sparking 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 chaunt  
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-clomb 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 galingale;  
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'.

### Choric 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 gentlier 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?

Lo! 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  
ease.

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 wov'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 mellow tone:  
Thro' every hollow 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 fights, 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*

## XXI

### TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground.  
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath.  
And after many a summer dies the swan.  
Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms.  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this grey shadow, once a man —  
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
To his great heart none other than a God!  
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality'.  
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills.  
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal youth.  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now.  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:  
Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure.  
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team.

## XXII

### CROSSING THE BAR

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,  
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes.  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?  
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts'.

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —  
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd  
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet.  
Like that strange song I hear Apollo sing.  
Why Iliion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:  
How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy burrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn:  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

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 stalle 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  
Infinitely 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 kicking 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.

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.



கொழும்பு துறைமுகக் கழகம்  
புதுச்சேரி