

## RAGING ROMANTICS

*The actors enter, with newspapers & journals and introduce themselves...*

**GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON**

Mad, bad and dangerous to know ? Scandal is cayenne pepper to the mind. I cannot be sure or answerable for all I have said or unsaid – I tremble for the trunkfuls of my contradictions, which may one day be exhibited in some magazine or some quartos of villainous memoirs written in a love fit! If my work can produce a *laugh* against itself or the author it will prove of some service. If it can set you to *sleep* the benefit will be yet greater. If "poetry is a mere drug" I offer you mine as a humble assistant to the *eau medicinale*.

**PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY**

Born in the purple of the English Squirearchy...but my father's notions of family honour are incoincident with my principles of public good; I will never sacrifice the latter to any consideration.

At Eton I was 'Mad Shelley' – refusing to fag – expelled from Oxford in my first year for my 'Necessity of Atheism' – married 'below me' at 19.

So...I am rather poor at present...Oh! That I might wallow for one night in the Bank of England! Nothing will cure the consumption of my purse yet it drags on a sort of life in death very like its master....always empty yet never quite exhausted.

I have great designs and feeble hopes of accomplishing them....  
The Government has me under observation, and I them.

**SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE**

My father was a schoolteacher. My family on my mother's side inherited a pig-sty and a house-sty in the reign of Elizabeth and nothing better since – I am a genuine *Sans-culotte*, my veins uncontaminated with any drop of Gentility.

My father was very fond of me and I was my mother's darling – in consequence I was very miserable.

I used to take 4 or 5 ounces a day of laudanum – once, near a pint – besides great quantities of liquor.

"If Mr Coleridge had not been the most impressive talker of his age, he would probably have been the first writer – he may be said to have lived on the sound of his own voice " – that was one of my better notices!

**JOHN KEATS**

The poet has no identity. Not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature – how can it when I have no nature? I am in a siege of contraries...

The other day during a lecture at Guy's Hospital, there came a sunbeam into the room and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray – and I was off with them to Oberon and fairyland. My last operation was the opening of a man's temporal artery....reflecting on what passed through my mind at the time my dexterity seemed a miracle, and I never took up the lancet again.

I carry all matters to an extreme so that when I have any little vexation it grows in five minutes into a theme for Sophocles...

*They settle & open the papers.*

**C**

A man must serve his time to every trade save censure....

**ALL** ....critics all are ready made.

**B**  
Steal other men's opinions, learned by rote

**S**  
With just enough of learning to misquote...

**K**  
...Care not for feeling, pass your proper jest

**ALL**  
And stand a Critic, hated yet caressed.  
(*Reading the reviews*)

**B**  
Shelley's poem is out, and there are words about its being objected to as much as "Queen Mab" was.

**ALL**  
Poor Shelley!

**B**  
"Mr Shelley has a fire in his eye, a fever in his blood, a maggot in his brain, a hectic flutter in his speech, which mark out the philosophic fanatic. It is a species of poetry that excites no emotion but that of wonder – we wonder what it means"

**K**  
"A mere collection of bloated words heaped on each other without order, harmony, or meaning....Nine cantos of blasphemy and impiety such as we never thought that anyone on the outside of Bedlam could have uttered...absolutely and intrinsically unintelligible"

**C**  
".....Like the Egyptian of old, the wheels of his chariot are broken, the path of mighty waters closes in upon him behind, and a still deepening ocean is before him: for a short time are seen his impotent struggles against a resistless power, his blasphemous execrations are heard, and he calls ineffectually on others to follow him to the same ruin" –

**B**  
".....finally, he sinks like lead to the bottom, and is forgotten. So it is now in part, so shortly will it be entirely with Mr Shelley."

**S**  
...I certainly bear them no ill-will for this abuse...indeed I was too much amused by being compared to Pharoah, not readily to forgive editor, printer, publisher, stitcher, or any one connected with something so exquisitely entertaining - except the despicable writer! My *chariot*, I may tell them, was built by one of the best makers in Bond Street, and it has gone several thousand miles in perfect security – and having carried me through Italy, France and Switzerland still continues in excellent repair....At least Mary's *Frankenstein* seems to have been well received, and is read in some considerable degree!

**C**  
Aha! You have a friend in Mr Hunt: "Failing in the attempt to refute Mr Shelley's philosophy, the Reviewers attack his private life. What is the argument of

this? Or what right have they to know any thing of the private life of an author? Or how would they like to have the same argument used against themselves?"

ALL

Here, here!

K "....With all his glory of ardour and vigour and humour, Byron is a singer who cannot sing..."

C

"...The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly in which he hardens himself....It is called 'Don Juan', and is meant to be a little quietly facetious upon every thing"–

B

...do you suppose that I could have any intention but to giggle and make giggle? - a playful satire with as little poetry could be helped – was what I meant –

K

"....how horrible an example of human nature...is this man, who has no pleasure left him but to gloat over and jeer at the most awful incidents of life. Byron's perverted education makes him assume to feel, and try to impart to others, those depraved sensations which the want of any education excites in many..."

B

- it may be profligate – but is it not *life*, is it not *the thing*? – Could any man have written it who has not lived in the world? – and tooled in a post-chaise? in a hackney coach? in a gondola? Against a wall? in a court carriage? in a vis-à-vis – on a table? – and under it?

S

He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to that end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country..But it is his weakness to be proud – He has many generous qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out.

B

As to the estimation of the English – before they insult me with their insolent condescension – I have not written for their pleasure – I know the precise worth of popular applause – for few Scribblers have had more of it – They have made me without my search a species of popular Idol. I awoke one morning and found myself famous! I have been cloyed with applause & sickened with abuse; at present I care for little but the Copyright; I have imbibed a great love for money – let me have it! & what I get by my brains I will spend on my bollocks as long as I have a tester or a testicle remaining – I shall not live long - & for that reason – I must live while I can!

C

As much as I loathe flattery from the bottom of my very *stomach*, yet I own myself no self-subsisting mind. The approbation and sympathy of good and intelligent men is my sea-breeze, without which I should languish from morn to evening ...as idle as a painted ship upon a painted –

B (Aha! The Mariner!)

"Many of the stanzas are laboriously beautiful; but in connection they are absurd or unintelligible....We do not sufficiently understand the story to analyse it"

**C** Until you understand a writer's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding...Poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood. It must create the taste whereby it is appreciated.

**B**

"...Genius here has been employed in producing a poem of little merit"

**K** "Coleridge conceives of poetry but as a drunken dream – reckless, careless and heedless of past, present and future –"

**S**

"he seems not a man, but a swarm, a cloud, a buzz of words, darting this way and that, clustering, quivering, and hanging suspended....he merely haunts the public imagination with obscure noises..."

**B**

"There is something disgusting at the bottom of his subject – like moon beams playing on a charnel-house or flowers strewn on a dead body –"

**C**

"Dear Mr Coleridge: I detest your principles, your prose I think so-so; but your poetry is exquisitely beautiful, so gorgeously sublime that I take your *Watchman* solely on account of it....I entreat you to give us more verse & less democratic scurrility..."

**K**

Who wrote that ?

**C**

Me.

**B**

"There's a screw loose in the whole marvellous machine"

**C**

How far can a man be a good or even an adequate critic of poetry who is not a poet?

**B**

Supposing he is not only not a poet, but is a bad poet? What then?.... Southey should have been a parish-clerk, and Wordsworth a man-midwife – both in darkness. I doubt if either of them ever got drunk, and I am of the old creed of Homer the wine-bibber.....Coleridge is the best of the trio – 'Christabel' – I won't have you sneer at Christabel – it is a fine wild poem....

**S**

(*reading from Blackwood's Review*).....Mr Keats is a boy of pretty abilities, which he has done everything in his power to spoil...one of the rising brood of Cockneys – uneducated and flimsy striplings who presume to talk with contempt of one of the most exquisite spirits the world ever produced – *Wordsworth!*

**B**

(*continues reading*) ....We venture to make one small prophecy; that his bookseller will not a second time venture 50 quid upon anything he can write. It is a better and wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr John, back to the "plasters, pills and ointment boxes" etc – But for Heaven's sake be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been in your poetry...

K

- Critics are like spectators at the Westminster Cock-Pit – they like the battle and do not care who wins or loses.... I will write independently. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what the *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict.....Who would wish to be among the commonplace crowd of the little-famous? Is it worth louting or playing the hypocrite for? To beg suffrages for a seat on the benches of a myriad aristocracy in letters?...so much as I am humbled by the genius above my grasp, am I exalted and look with hate and contempt upon the literary world

B

“Johnny *piss-a-bed* Keats –tadpole of the Lakes!”

K

Who said that?

B

Me.

K

“Keats is a sour mal content”

B

Who said that?

K

Me.

C

"He seems to have known the world by intuition – to have looked through nature at one glance"

S & K

Who said that?

B

Pope.

C

...Of myriad-minded Shakespeare.

B

.....The worst of models, though the most extraordinary of writers - Shakespeare’s name, you may depend on it, stands absurdly too high and will go down. I am not an admirer of our old dramatists *as models*. I deny that the English have hitherto had a drama at all.

C

I have a smack of Hamlet myself if I may say so .....

K

What Shakespeare possessed so enormously was Negative Capability – when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason –With a great Poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.

C

...That willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith....

S

Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are in one sense the creators and in another the creations of their age....The great writers of our own age are the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it....

K

What benefit can’st

thou do, or all thy tribe, to the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing, a fever of thyself....

**B**

The lunatic, the lover and the poet

**ALL**

Are of imagination all compact. (*all laugh*)

**K**

We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us! Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject. –How beautiful are the retired flowers! How would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway crying out “admire me I am a violet! – dote upon me I am a daffodil!” Modern poets differ from the Elizabethans in this.....I will have no more of Wordsworth!

**B** -That pedlar-praising son of a bitch apostate!

**C** Wordsworth is a very great man, the only man to whom *at all times* I feel myself inferior – the only one, I mean, whom *I have yet met with*, for the London *literati* appear to me to be very much like little potatoes, that is, *no great things*, a compost of nullity and dullity –

**B** (*interrupting*) Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,  
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?  
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,  
Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest.

**C** -I dare affirm that he will hereafter be admitted as the first and greatest philosophical poet –

**K** – (*overlapping*)

Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,  
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line  
Empty the haunted air and gnomed mine –  
Unweave a rainbow -

**C** -I have been honoured more than I deserve by the frequent conjunction of my name with his!

**S** -I am sorry to say that Wordsworth has left a bad impression wherever he visited in town by his egotism, vanity, and bigotry. Yet he is a great poet if not a philosopher –

**K** - I don't mean to deny Wordsworth's grandeur, but I mean to say we need not be teased with grandeur & merit – when we can have them uncontaminated & unobtrusive. Let us have the old Poets – they give me more pleasure than the 4<sup>th</sup> Book of Byron's Child Harold or the whole of any body's life & opinions....like when I first looked into Chapman's Homer –

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states & kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;  
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken;  
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
 He star'd at the Pacific – and all his men  
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise –  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

S

But.... it is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words – Coleridge ....

K Coleridge is a man who cannot feel he has a personal identity unless he has made his mind up about everything! Last Sunday I took a walk towards Highgate and met with Coleridge in conversation with Mr Green – I walked with them at his alderman-after-dinner pace for near two miles I suppose. In those two miles he broached a thousand things – let me see if I can give you a list – Nightingales, Poetry – Metaphysics – Different genera and species of Dreams – Nightmare – a dream accompanied by a sense of touch – First & Second consciousness – (so many metaphysicians from a want of smoking never achieve this Second consciousness) – Monsters – the Kraken – Mermaids – a Ghost story – Good Morning! – I heard his voice as he came towards me – I heard it as he moved away – I heard it all the interval – if it may be called so. He was civil enough to ask me to call upon him at Highgate....Good Night!!!!

C

Take my nonsense like a pinch of snuff – sneeze it off, it clears the head! .....(*To Byron or Shelley*)..... after he left us a little way he came back and said: "Let me carry away the memory, Coleridge, of having pressed your hand" ...when Keats was gone I said to Green 'there is death in that hand' - yet this was, I believe, before the consumption showed itself distinctly....

K

I think poetry should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts and appear almost a remembrance...  
 Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know -

S

- Poetry strips the veil of familiarity from the hidden beauty of the world, it compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know –

C

Poetry has a logic of its own as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive, 'causes'. A great poet must be, implicate if not explicite, a profound Metaphysician – he must bring the whole soul of man into activity –

B

Explaining metaphysics to the nation –  
 I wish he would explain his explanation! –

C

-for all sounds & forms of human nature he must have the *ear* of a wild Arab listening in the silent desert - the *eye* of a North American Indian tracing the footsteps of an enemy upon the leaves that strew the forest; the *touch* of a blind man feeling the face of a child..

K

....it is easier to think what Poetry should be than to write it.....

C

...Yes...twisting red hot poker into knots. Man is tied to Nature. If he cuts that tie then the result is chaos.

B

Our 'art' comes over me in a kind of rage every now and then, like fucking, and then if I don't write to empty my mind I go mad....With regard to poetry in general I am convinced that all of us are in the wrong – one as much as another – that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system – and that the present & next generations will finally be of this opinion.

S

A man cannot say: 'I will compose poetry'...when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet....Recollect our sensations as children – what a distinct and intense apprehension had we of the world and ourselves! We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt from ourselves. They seemed as it were to constitute one mass. There are some persons who, in this respect, are always children.

K The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness...

C

“If the doors of perception were cleansed, every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite”...

K

..... as Blake tells us –

C

Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves  
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole...

But 'tis God

Diffused through all that doth make all one whole –

S

God is an hypothesis, and as such in need of proof. We must prove design before we can infer a designer.

C

Evidence of Christianity!– make a man feel the *want* of it; rouse him to the *need* of it; and you may safely trust it to its own *evidence*..

B

We are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another.

S

As if, after sixty years' suffering here, we were to be roasted alive for sixty million more in hell, annihilated by the bungler who brought us into existence!! I am, through deficiency of proof, an atheist.

B

I will have nothing to do with your immortality...let me live, well if possible, and die without pain. The rest is with God, who assuredly, had He *come* or *sent*, would have made himself manifest to nations, and intelligible to all. And who will believe that God will damn men for not knowing what they were never taught? I will bring you ten Muslims shall shame you in all goodwill towards men, prayer to God, and duty to their neighbours!

K

Thou art a man, God is no more,  
Thine own humanity learn to adore....

C

..... as Blake tells us!

The English are practical Atheists – professing to believe in God yet acting as if there were none –

B

All are inclined to believe what they covet, from the lottery-ticket up to a passport to Paradise – in which, from description, I see nothing tempting. In the midst of the myriads of living and dead worlds – stars - systems – infinity – I imagine our pretensions to eternity might be overrated.

C

But what if all animated nature  
Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,  
That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps  
Plastic and vast one intellectual breeze,  
At once the soul of each and God of all...?

B

One certainly has a soul; but how it came to allow itself to be enclosed in a body is more than I can imagine. I only know if once mine gets out, I'll have a bit of a tussle before I let it in again.....

S

God is a hypocritical Demon. In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude. The Protestant Religion! Its origin is called the Reformation – undertaken by some bigoted men who showed how little they understood the spirit of Reform by burning each other. I believe in a kind of optimism in which we are our own gods.

K

And Christ?

S

Humbly he came  
Veiling his horrible godhead in the shape of man.  
He led the crowd; he taught them justice, truth and peace  
In semblance, but he lit within their souls  
The quenchless flames of Zeal.

He peopled earth with demons, hell with men  
And heaven with slaves.

**B** (*of S*)....is it possible this mild-looking, beardless boy, could be at war with all the world?

**C**

What comes from the heart goes to the heart. Truth should be spoken at all times, but more especially at those times when to speak Truth is dangerous –

**K**

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave  
A paradise for a sect - But  
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,  
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.  
The one pours out a balm upon the world,  
The other vexes it....

**S**

Poets are the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present, the trumpets which sing to battle !

... if man be

The passive thing you say, I should not see

Much harm in the religions and old saws.

Mine is another faith – it is our will

That thus enchains us to

permitted ill –

We might be otherwise – we might be all

We dream of - happy, high, majestic.

Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek

But in our mind? and if we were not weak

Should we be less in deed than in desire?

**B** Ay, if we were not weak – and we aspire

How vainly to be strong!

**S** It remains to know – and those who try may find

How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;

Brittle perchance as straw ! We know

That we have power over ourselves to do

And suffer – what, we know not till we try –

But something nobler than to live and die –

So taught those kings of old philosophy

Who reigned before Religion made them blind –

**B** You were ever still

Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,

A wolf for the meek lambs -

**S** -Pride

Makes my companion take the darker side.

The sense that he is greater than his kind

Hath struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind

By gazing on its own exceeding light .

**B**  
**My dear friend, I knew one like you**  
**With whom I argued in this sort, and he**  
**Is now gone mad. You talk Utopia.**

**C**  
**My Utopia was to be on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania**  
**– a plan to give nature and reason a new start on a new continent....I believed a few**  
**hundred pounds and the will to abandon individual property were all that was**  
**needed – a pantisocratic commune!**

**B**     **And?**

**C**                     **I couldn't find sufficiently committed women – Shelley could**  
**have helped me there !**

**S**  
**Yes! I believe, with Mary Wollstonecraft, in Free Love (though love seems**  
**inclined to stay in the prison). From the abolition of marriage the fit and natural**  
**arrangement of sexual connection would result – with women equal partners –**  
**.....frank and radiant forms**

**From custom's evil taint exempt and free**  
**Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,**  
**Looking emotions once they feared to feel,**  
**And changed to all they dare not be –**  
**B - - you have a passion for reforming the world.**  
**K - he is “one of those to whom the miseries of the world**  
**Are misery, and will not let them rest”.....**

**S**  
**History is largely a record of crimes and miseries.**  
**Power, like a devastating pestilence**  
**Pollutes whate'er it touches.**  
**Makes slaves of men and of the human frame**  
**A mechanized automaton.**

**The abolition of personal slavery is the highest political hope that it can enter into**  
**the mind of man to conceive...**

**B**                     **....and parliament is *still* debating abolition! Pro-**  
**slavers say 'if England should abolish the slave trade other Nations will carry it on'**

**C**  
**They say slaves are humanely treated! – with iron neck-collars and**  
**thumbscrews!**

**S**  
**The plantation slaves, they say, are at least as well off as the peasantry in**  
**England – this asserts that our peasantry are as bad off as negro slaves – if our**  
**peasantry believed that, would they not be inclined to rebel?**

**B**  
**This country wants a little 'civil buffeting' to bring some of us to our senses.**

**S**  
**Popular insurrections and revolutions I look upon with discountenance – as**  
**Quakers do – but if such things must be, I will take the side of the People. I had**

great hopes of the United Irishmen, whose wrongs make them hate England – I circulated a Declaration of Rights and proposed an Association opposing the Union Act –

C - the most successful engine that England ever wielded over the misery of fallen Ireland –

B - If it must be called a Union, it is the union of the shark with his prey!

S

-I met no determined Republicans, but found some who were Democratifiable-

B

In the Lords, I opposed the Bill which would make 'frame-breaking' a capital offence- I have seen the state of these miserable men, these machine-breakers, and it is a disgrace to a civilized country – their excesses may be condemned, but cannot be the subject of wonder – I warned that the effect of the Bill would be to drive them into actual rebellion –I was shouted down as being too lenient and half a *frame-breaker* myself! When a proposal is made to emancipate and relieve they hesitate, they deliberate for years ; but a death-bill must be passed off-hand, and without a thought of consequences. I am sick of parliamentary mummeries and have no intention to 'strut another hour' on that stage.

S.

The Government must content itself with less in taxes, the landholder less rent and the fundholder a diminished interest or they will all get nothing! England is a sleeping volcano !

B

The fact is riches are power and poverty is slavery all over the earth and one sort of establishment is no better or worse than another... Did you ever read Malthus on Population Control? If he be right war and pestilence are our best friends, to save us from being overstocked or eaten alive in this 'best of all possible worlds'

C

Byron is accused of trying 'to poison the springs of social love and undermine the foundations of order and religion'....Shelley is considered 'too openly virulent to be dangerous – Shelley, the wolf, may be repelled from the fold while the Serpent, Byron, glides in unsuspected and unnoticed'

B

- and *you* are labelled a 'West Country Radical' –

K

"Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin!"

C

Jacobin? Yes, I am, if Jacobin is one who says no legislation can be rightful or good which does not proceed from Universal suffrage! Ours is a government *over*, not *by* or *with* the people.

S

England does not have a Constitution – it has Rule *Britannia* and *God Save the King!*

**B**

..... God save the king! And kings!

For if he don't, I doubt if men will longer –

The king-times are fast finishing. There will be blood shed like water and tears like mist – but the peoples will conquer in the end. I shall not live to see it, but I forsee it...

I Think I hear a little bird who sings

The people by and by will be the stronger....

*(now addressing the audience?)*

And ye – our children's children! Think how we

Show'd *what things were* before the world was free!

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,

And those who sat upon them, let it be

As now we gaze upon the mammoth's bones,

And wonder what old world such things could see....

**K** In truth I do not at all believe in perfectibility – the nature of the world will not admit it...Man is a "poor forked creature" subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or another – I admire Human Nature but I do not like Men.

**S**

Liberty will not be kept alive by each citizen sitting quietly by his own fireside and saying that things are going on well because the rain does not beat on *him!* The rich grind the poor into abjectness and then complain that they are abject. They goad them to famine and hang them if they steal a loaf.

**C**

- The Poor are not to be pitied, however great their necessities: for if they be out of employ, the KING wants men! – They may be shipped off to the Slaughterhouse abroad, if they wish to escape a Prison at home or penal servitude in Terra Australis! – Fools! to commit robberies, and get hung, when they might Murder with impugny – yea – and have Sixpence into the bargain!  
We, this whole people, have been clamorous  
For war and bloodshed, animating sports  
The which we pay for, as a thing to talk of,  
Spectators and not combatants!....

Boys and girls,

And women, that would groan to see a child

Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,

The best amusement for our morning meal!

The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers

From curses, who knows scarcely words enough

To ask a blessing of his heavenly Father,

Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute

And technical in victories and defeats,

And all our dainty terms for fratricide,

Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues

Like mere abstractions.

As if the soldier died without a wound;  
 As if the fibres of this godlike frame  
 Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,  
 Who fell in battle doing bloody deeds,  
 Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed;  
 As though he had no wife to pine for him,  
 No God to judge him!

**B**

A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him .  
 This is the patent Age of new inventions  
 For killing bodies, and for saving souls,  
 All propagated with the best intentions:  
 Sir Humphrey Davy's lantern, by which coals  
 Are safely mined for (in the mode he mentions);  
 Timbuctoo travels; voyages to the Poles;  
 Are always to benefit mankind: - as true,  
 Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.

**K**

But this is human life; the war, the deeds,  
 The disappointments, the anxiety,  
 Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,  
 All human - .....As Wordsworth says, "we have all one human heart" –But  
 very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of mind- a  
 pure desire of the benefit of others - the greater part of men make their way  
 with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their  
 purposes, the same eagerness as the hawk..

**C**

- their Will becomes remorseless despotism - immovable  
 Resolve with perfect Indifference of Means – these are the qualities that have  
 characterized the Masters of Mischief, the Liberticides, and mighty Hunters of  
 Mankind, from Nimrod to Napoleon!!

**S** **Bonaparte!**

I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan  
 To think that a most unambitious slave,  
 Like thou, shouldest dance and revel on the grave of Liberty!

**B**

In politics, what begins in fear usually ends in failure...  
 'Let there be light!' said God, 'and there was light!'  
 'Let there be blood!' says man, and there's a sea!

**C**

The French Revolution was not brought about any more than it was begun  
 by Terrorists. Revolutions are sudden to the unthinking only. Few persons but those  
 who have lived in it can conceive or comprehend what the French Revolution was,  
 nor what a visionary world seemed to open up upon those who were just entering it.  
 Old things seemed passing away, and nothing was dreamt of but the regeneration of  
 the human race.....“ .....a spirit was abroad

Which could not be withstood...  
 poverty would in a little time be found no more..  
 All institutes for ever blotted out  
 That legalised exclusion; empty pomp  
 Abolished, sensual state, and cruel power  
 And finally, as sum and crown of all,  
 .....the People having a strong hand  
 In making their own laws – whence better days  
 To all mankind!.....  
 'Twas a time when Europe was rejoiced,  
 France standing on the top of golden hours,  
 And human nature seeming born again.....  
 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive –

S

- But to be young was very heaven!"

C

Out of Chaos God made a world, and out of high passions comes a people!

K

(To C) Providence has been pleased to drop you on this globe as a meteor from the clouds, the track of which is undetermined...

B

The Home Office has a file on you, d'you know, and Wordsworth....what exactly were you doing at the Lakes.....?

(he reads): "the man has Camp Stools, which he and his visitors take with them when they go about the country upon their nocturnal or diurnal excursions, and have also a Portfolio in which they enter their observations, which they have been heard to say were almost finished. They have been heard to say that they should be rewarded for them, and were very attentive to the river near them – probably the river coming within a mile or two of Alfoxton from Bridgewater. These people may possibly be under Agents to some principal at Bristol"

K

The world is full of misery and heartbreak, pain, sickness and oppression..Give me books, fruit, French wine and fine weather and a little music out of doors, and I can pass a summer very quietly without caring much about fat Louis, fat Regent or the Duke of Wellington....

B

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,  
 Let him combat for that of his neighbours;  
 Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,  
 And get knock'd on the head for his labours.

S

We are *all* Greeks – but for Greece we might still have been savages and idolators.... The apathy of the rulers of the civilized world is something perfectly inexplicable! The English sympathise with the Turkish tyrant; Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece – and is contented to see the Turks and the Greeks, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy

of England would be to establish the independence of Greece, maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk –

**B** - I see not much difference between ourselves and the Turks, save that we talk much and they little, we have foreskins and they none. In England the vices in fashion are whoring and drinking; in Turkey, sodomy and smoking. I respect the Americans because they acquired their freedom by firmness without excess....in a century or two English and Spanish Atlantides will be masters of the old Countries in all probability, as Greece and Europe overcame their Mother Asia in earlier ages.  
**S**

- This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers called Sovereigns, look to each other for aid against the common enemy – the common man! In England things are always carried violently by our rulers, they will never learn to yield in time to the spirit of the age – the terrible massacre in Manchester –  
**K**

-a bloody charge against unarmed Englishmen –  
**C** -consulting in common on common grievances!..... From east to west a groan of accusation pierces heaven!

**B** The cause is obvious – the government exacted too much, and the people could neither *give* nor *bear* more.

**S**  
 ‘Men of England, heirs of Glory,  
 Heroes of unwritten story,

**C**  
 Nurslings of one mighty Mother,  
 Hopes of her, and one another;

**S**  
 Rise like Lions after slumber  
 In unvanquishable number,  
 Shake your chains to earth like dew  
 Which in sleep had fallen on you –  
**ALL**

Ye are many – they are few.

**C**  
 Be your strong and simple words  
 Keen to wound as sharpened swords,  
 And if then the tyrants dare  
 Let them ride among you there,  
**ALL**

Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew –  
**S**

What they like, that let them do.  
 And that slaughter to the Nation  
 Shall steam up like inspiration,  
 Eloquent, oracular;  
 A volcano heard afar.

C

And these words shall then become  
Like Oppression's thundered doom  
Ringing through each heart and brain,  
ALL –

    Heard again – again – again -

S

Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number –  
Shake your chains to earth like dew,  
Which in sleep had fallen on you –

ALL

Ye are many – they are few.”

C

It might make a patriot of any man whose heart was not wholly closed against his  
humbler fellow-creatures! (*Glasses are charged*)

B

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;  
    The best of life is but intoxication:  
Get very drunk; and when you wake with head-ache-  
Ring for your valet – bid him quickly bring  
    Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know  
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;  
    For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with snow,  
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,  
    Nor burgundy in all its sunset glow,  
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,  
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water.

K

    Give me women, wine and snuff  
    Until I cry out “hold, enough!”  
    You may do so sans objection  
    Till the day of resurrection;  
    For bless my beard they aye shall be  
    My beloved Trinity.

C

Ah! Snuff! – the final cause of the human nose!..Once in the 24 hours I take  
half a grain of purified opium, equal to 12 drops of laudanum – which is not more  
than an 8<sup>th</sup> part of what I took at Keswick, exclusive of Beer, Brandy, & Tea, which  
last is undoubtedly a pernicious Stimulant...

....Opium leaves my sensitive frame *so* sensitive! My enjoyments are so deep, of the  
fire, of the candle, of the thought I am thinking, of the old Folio I am reading – and  
the silence of the silent House is so *most* & very delightful...

.....Sir Joseph Banks sent some Bang .....We will have a fair trial of Bang – Do  
bring us some of those Hyoscyamine Pills & I will give a fair trial of Opium,

Hensbane, & Nepenthe. Bye the bye, I always considered Homer's account of the *Nepenthe* as a *Banging* lie...(starts dreaming up KK).....

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.....(*nods off*)

**K** I am writing at random – straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness – without knowing the bearing of any one assertion or any one opinion. I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of Imagination – What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth - whether it existed before or not.

**C**.....It was a miracle of rare device,

A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer

In a vision once I saw:

It was an Abyssinian maid,

And on her dulcimer she played,

Singing of Mount Abora.....

**S**

.....A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of unseen musicians, who feel that they are moved, and softened, yet know not whence or why.

**C**.....Could I revive within me

Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight 'twould win me,

That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice.....

**K**

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thy happiness, -

That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,

Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time

I have been half in love with easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,

To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,

To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
 In such an ecstasy!  
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain –  
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
 No hungry generations tread thee down;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown.  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn  
 The self-same that oft-times hath  
 Charm'd magic casements opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.....

**B**

I think I prefer Coleridge's version:

Most musical, most melancholy bird!  
 A melancholy bird? Oh! Idle thought!  
 In nature there is nothing melancholy.

**C**

..... And all who heard should see them there,  
 And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
 Weave a circle round him thrice,  
 And close your eyes with holy dread.....

**B, S & K** (*finishing it for him*)

.....For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
 And drunk the milk of Paradise!

**S**

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from Heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Like a poet hidden  
 In the light of thought,  
 Singing hymns unbidden,  
 Till the world is wrought  
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

Waking or asleep,  
 Thou of death must deem  
 Things more true and deep  
 Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,  
 And pine for what is not:  
 Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught;  
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Teach me half the gladness  
 That thy brain must know,  
 Such harmonious madness  
 From my lips would flow  
 The world should listen – as I am listening now.

**K**

.....I scarcely remember counting upon any happiness – I look not for it if it be not in the present hour – nothing startles me beyond the Moment. The setting sun will always set me to rights – or if a sparrow comes before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel.....

**C**

In looking at the objects of Nature while I am thinking, I seem to be seeking a symbolic language for something within me that already and forever exists - a forgotten or hidden truth of my inner nature....

....the living spirit in our frame,  
 That loves not to behold a lifeless thing,  
 Transfuses into all its own delights,  
 Its own volition, sometimes with deep faith,  
 And sometimes with fantastic playfulness.

My babe so beautiful, it thrills my heart  
 With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,  
 And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,  
 And in far other scenes! For I was reared  
 In the great city, pent mid cloisters dim,  
 And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.  
 But thou, my babe, shalt wander like a breeze  
 By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
 Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
 Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
 And mountain-crag.

All seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
 Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
 With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
 Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
 Of mossy apple-tree, while all the thatch  
 Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall  
 Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
 Or whether the secret ministry of cold

Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
 Quietly shining to the quiet moon –  
 Like those, my babe, which, ere tomorrow's warmth  
 Have capped their sharp keen points with pendulous drops,  
 Will catch thine eye, and with their novelty  
 Suspend thy little soul, then make thee shout  
 And stretch and flutter from thy mother's arms  
 As thou wouldst fly for very eagerness.

S (quoting Robbie Burns)

Gie me ae spark o'Nature's fire,  
 That's a' the learning I desire...  
 My Muse, though hamely in attire,  
 May touch the heart.....

K Thank-you, Robbie Burns!

B

Neither the music of the Shepherd, nor the torrent – nor the Cloud – have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart – nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above - & beneath me.

S

O wild west wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
 Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
 Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,  
 Yellow and black and pale and hectic red  
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes!  
 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
 And by the incantations of this verse  
 Scatter as from an unextinguished hearth  
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth  
 The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,  
 If Winter comes, can spring be far behind?

B

.....I by no means rank poetry high in the scale of intelligence –this may look like affectation – but it is my real opinion .....poetry is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake... I can never get people to understand that poetry is the expression of *excited passion*...and that there is no such thing as a life of passion any more than a continuous earthquake, or an eternal fever. Besides, who would ever *shave* themselves in such a state?

S When my brain gets heated with thought, it soon boils, and throws off images and words faster than I can skim them off. In the morning, when cooled down, out of the rude sketch...I shall attempt a drawing...

I see the deep's untrampled floor

With green and purple seaweeds strown;

I see the waves upon the shore,

Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown;  
 I sit upon the sands alone.  
 The lightning of the noontide ocean  
 Is flashing round me, and a tone  
 Arises from its measured motion,  
 How sweet – did any heart now share in my emotion!  
 Alas, I have nor hope, nor health,  
 Nor peace within, nor calm around,  
 Nor that content surpassing wealth  
 The sage in meditation found,  
 And walked with inward glory crowned –  
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.  
 Others I see whom these surround,  
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure –  
 To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

C

“Joys impregnate ; sorrows bring forth”

S

The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure  
 itself...and hence the saying: “it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the  
 house of mirth”

K

Knowledge is sorrow....Sorrow is wisdom....Wisdom is folly (for aught we  
 know for certainty!)

B

Imaginary sufferings are as a scratch to a cancer.

K

We see not the balance of good and evil. We are in a mist – we feel “the  
 burden of the mystery”

O, what can ail thee, knight at arms,  
 Alone and palely loitering;  
 The sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
 And no birds sing.

O, what can ail thee, knight at arms,  
 So haggard and so woe-begone?  
 The squirrel's granary is full,  
 And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,  
 With anguish moist and fever dew;  
 And on thy cheek a fading rose  
 Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads  
 Full beautiful, a faery's child;

He hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,  
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;  
She look'd at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,  
And nothing else saw all day long;  
For sideways would she lean, and sing  
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew;  
And sure in language strange she said,  
I love thee true.

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she gaz'd and sighed full sore,  
And there I shut her wild wild eyes  
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,  
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,  
The latest dream I ever dream'd  
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
They cry'd – "La belle Dame sans merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam  
With horrid warning gaped wide,  
And I awoke, and found me here  
On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here  
Alone and palely loitering,  
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

S

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,  
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing

Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;  
 I was heard not – I saw them not ....

C I can well believe that there are more invisible than visible natures in the universe. But who shall describe their family?....The human mind has always sought after, but never attained, knowledge of these things...Myself, I am as lost as my Mariner, a mind shipwrecked by storms of doubt; mastless, rudderless, shattered, - pulling in the dead swell of a dark & windless sea.....

We listened and looked sideways up!  
 Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
 My life-blood seemed to sip!  
 The stars were dim, and thick the night,  
 The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;  
 From the sails the dew did drip –  
 Till clomb above the eastern bar  
 The horned Moon, with one bright star  
 Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
 Too quick for groan or sigh,  
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
 And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,  
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan)  
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
 They fled to bliss or woe!  
 The souls did from their bodies fly, -  
 They fled to bliss or woe!  
 And every soul, it passed me by,  
 Like the whiz of my crossbow!"

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!  
 I fear thy skinny hand!  
 And thou art long, and lank, and brown,  
 As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,  
 And thy skinny hand, so brown." –  
 "Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!  
 This body dropped not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
 Alone on a wide, wide sea!  
 And never a saint took pity on  
 My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!  
 And they all dead did lie:  
 And a thousand thousand slimy things  
 Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,  
 And drew my eyes away;  
 I looked upon the rotting deck,  
 And there the dead men lay.  
 I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;  
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
 A wicked whisper came, and made  
 My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
 And 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,  
 Nor rot nor reek did they:  
 The look with which they looked on me  
 Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell  
 A spirit from on high;  
 But oh! 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 bemoaned the sultry main,  
 Like April hoar-frost spread;  
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
 The charmed water burnt always  
 A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship  
 I watched the water-snakes:

They moved in tracks of shining white,  
 And when they reared, the elfish light  
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
 I watched their rich attire:  
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
 They coiled 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 gushed from my heart,  
 And I blessed them unaware:  
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
 And I blessed them unaware.

That self-same moment I could pray;  
 And from my neck so free  
 The Albatross fell off, and sank  
 Like lead into the sea...  
 (*B & S break the mood with a Toast?*)

B

Happy the nations of the moral North!

ALL Happy the nations of the moral North!

S

Where all is virtue, and the winter season  
 Sends sin without a rag on, shivering forth –

B ('Twas snow that brought St. Anthony to reason)

S

Where juries cast up what a wife is worth  
 By laying whate'er sum, in mulct, they please on  
 The lover –

B -who must pay a handsome price

ALL Because it is a marketable vice.

B

Alfonso was the name of Julia's lord,  
 A man well looking for his years, and who  
 Was neither much beloved nor yet abhorr'd:  
 They lived together as most people do,  
 Suffering each other's foibles by accord,  
 And not exactly either *one* or *two*;  
 Yet he was jealous, though he did not show it,  
 For jealousy dislikes the world to know it.

Juan she saw, and, as a pretty child,

Caress'd him often – such a thing might be  
 Quite innocently done, and harmless styled,  
 When she had twenty years, and thirteen he;  
 But I am not so sure I should have smiled  
 When he was sixteen, Julia twenty-three;  
 These few short years make wondrous alterations,  
 Particularly amongst the sun-burnt nations.

Whate'er the cause might be, they had become  
 Chang'd; for the dame grew distant, the youth shy,  
 Their looks cast down, their greetings almost dumb,  
 And much embarrassment in either eye;  
 There surely will be little doubt with some  
 That Donna Julia knew the reason why,  
 But as for Juan, he had no more notion  
 Than he who never saw the sea or ocean.

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks,  
 Thinking unutterable things; he threw  
 Himself at length within the leafy nooks  
 Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew;  
 There poets find materials for their books,  
 And every now and then we read them through,  
 So that their plan and prosody are eligible,  
 Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

He thought about himself, and the whole earth,  
 Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,  
 And how the deuce they ever could have birth;  
 And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,  
 How many miles the moon might have in girth,  
 Of air-balloons, and of the many bars  
 To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies; -  
 And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,  
 And of the folly of all prudish fears,  
 Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,  
 And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:  
 I wish these last had not occur'd, in sooth,  
 Because that number rarely much endears,  
 And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,  
 Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love  
 For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,

By all the vows below to powers above,  
     She never would disgrace the ring she wore,  
 Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;  
     And while she ponder'd this, besides much more,  
 One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,  
 Quite by mistake – she thought it was her own;

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,  
     But what he did, is much what you would do;  
 His young lip thank'd it with a grateful kiss,  
     And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew  
 In deep despair, lest he had done amiss, -  
     Love is so very timid when 'tis new:  
 She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,  
 And held her tongue, her voice had grown so weak.  
 And then – God knows what next – I can't go on;  
 I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.....

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,  
     Until too late for useful conversation;  
 The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,  
     I wish, indeed, they had not had occasion,  
 But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?  
     Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;  
 A little still she strove, and much repented,  
 And whispering "I will ne'er consent" – consented.  
 .....I've not quite fixed whether to make him end in Hell or in an unhappy  
 marriage – the Spanish tradition says Hell but the other state would be severer.

K

When I am among women I have evil thoughts ....I cannot speak or be silent.  
 I am full of suspicions and therefore listen to nothing. I am in a hurry to be  
 gone...You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed  
 since boyhood....I must get over this, but how? ....After all, I do think better of  
 womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats five feet high likes  
 them or not!....No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed  
 around me – my solitude is sublime...the roaring of the wind is my life and the stars  
 through the window pane are my children....I melt into the air with a  
 voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone...

B

All this flogging of the imagination... I'm sorry, but its mental masturbation!

K

O to be six feet tall and a Lord!

S

Touche!

B

A touch, a touch, I do confess it!

C

I have loved *one* woman, and believe that such a love of such a woman is the highest friendship – for we cannot love a friend as a woman, but we *can* love a woman as a friend.....Every man wishes a Desdemona or Ophelia for a wife – creatures who, though they may not always understand you, do always feel you and feel with you..

B

I *must* marry – You know I hate women & for fear I should ever change that opinion I *shall* marry – when I discover one rich enough to suit me & foolish enough to have me. Money is the magnet...one is as well as another – the older the better, we have then a better chance of getting her to heaven. As to *Love* – that is done in a week (provided the Lady has a reasonable share) – besides marriage goes on better with esteem and confidence than romance. My house is a delightful matrimonial mansion; when I wed my spouse and I will be so happy – one in each wing.

S

What *is* love? It is that powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything that exists.

K

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art –  
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night  
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,  
 The moving waters at their priest-like task  
 Of pure ablution round the earth's human shores,  
 Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask  
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors –  
 No – yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
 Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
 And so live ever – or else swoon to death.

S

Music, when soft voices die,  
 Vibrates in the memory;  
 Odors, when sweet violets sicken,  
 Live within the sense they quicken.  
 Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
 Are heaped for the beloved's bed;  
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
 Love itself shall slumber on.

B

She walks in beauty, like the night  
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
 And all that's best of dark and bright

Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
 Thus mellow'd to that tender light  
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
 Had half impair'd the nameless grace  
 Which waves in every raven tress,  
 Or softly lightens o'er her face,  
 Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
 But tell of days in goodness spent,  
 A mind at peace with all below,  
 A heart whose love is innocent!

**K**

O blush not so! O blush not so!  
 Or I shall think you knowing;  
 And if you smile the blushing while,  
 Then maidenheads are going.  
 There's a blush for won't, and a blush for shan't,  
 And a blush for having done it:  
 There's a blush for thought and a blush for naught,  
 And a blush for just begun it.  
 O sigh not so! O sigh not so!  
 For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;  
 By these loosen'd lips you have tasted the pips  
 And fought in an amorous nipping.  
 There's a sigh for yes and a sigh for no,  
 And a sigh for I can't bear it!  
 O what can be done, shall we stay or run?  
 O cut the sweet apple and share it !

**S**

I can give not what men call love,  
 But wilt thou accept not  
 The worship the heart lifts above  
 And the Heavens reject not –  
 The desire of the moth for the star,  
 Of the night for the morrow,  
 The devotion to something afar  
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

**K**

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,

That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.  
 She dwells with Beauty – beauty that must die.....

C

I have loved many more than I ever loved myself...but never, never have I  
 met any being who did not love many better than they loved me...  
 Farewell, sweet Love! yet blame you not my truth;  
 More fondly ne'er did mother eye her child  
 Than I your form: *yours* were my hopes of youth,  
 And as *you* shaped my thoughts I sighed or smiled.  
 While most were wooing wealth, or gaily swerving  
 To pleasure's secret haunts, and some apart  
 Stood strong in pride, self-conscious of deserving,  
 To you I gave my whole weak wishing heart.  
 And when I met the maid that realized  
 Your fair creations, and had won her kindness,  
 Say, but for her if aught on earth I prized!  
*Your* dreams alone I dreamt, and caught your blindness.  
 O grief! – but farewell, Love! I will go play me  
 With thoughts that please me less, and less betray me.

S

When the lamp is shattered  
 The light in the dust lies dead –  
 When the cloud is scattered  
 The rainbow's glory is shed.  
 When the lute is broken,  
 Sweet tones are remembered not;  
 When the lips have spoken,  
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour  
 Survive not the lamp and the lute,  
 The heart's echoes render  
 No song when the spirit is mute: -  
 No song but sad dirges,  
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,  
 Or the mournful surges  
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

B

So we'll go no more a roving

So late into the night,  
 Though the heart be still as loving,  
 And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,  
 And the soul wears out the breast,  
 And the heart must pause to breathe,  
 And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving  
 And the day returns too soon,  
 Yet we'll go no more a roving  
 By the light of the moon.

**K**

Byron, how sweetly sad thy melody,  
 Attuning still the soul to tenderness!

**C**

I am persuaded that we love what is above us more than what is under us.

**S**

.....I know  
 That love makes all things equal:  
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod,  
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

**K**

Nothing strikes me so forcibly with a sense of the ridiculous as love. A Man in love I do think cuts the sorriest figure in the world. Even when I know a poor fool to be really in pain about it, I could burst out laughing in his face.

His pathetic visage becomes irresistible...

Pensive they sit, and roll their languid eyes.  
 Nibble their toasts, and cool their tea with sighs,  
 Or else forget the purpose of the night  
 Forget their tea – forget their appetite.

Women are children to whom I would rather give a sugar plum than my time....a barrier against matrimony which I rejoice in.

**B**

There is a tide in the affairs of women,  
 Which, taken at the flood, leads – God knows where!

I have not had a whore this half-year - confining myself to the strictest adultery...if a girl of eighteen comes prancing to you at all hours, there is but one way....I'm accused of treating women harshly – it may be so – but I have been more ravished myself than anybody since the Trojan War.

**C**

And what of Lady Caroline Lamb?

**B**

Is she mad or mischievous only? If she will raise a storm, be it so, she will be the first to perish in it...I must pronounce Caroline to be the most contradictory, absurd, selfish & contemptibly wicked of human productions – What she may say of

me I can only surmise by what she has said of others, but she seems to outdo the usual outdoings of *gentlewomen* on such occasions. I do not mean to deny my attachment – it *was* and is not. It was no great compliment for I could love anything on earth that appeared to wish it – at the same time I do sometimes like to choose for myself.

S

I never was attached to that great sect  
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select  
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code  
Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,  
Who travel to their home among the dead  
By the broad highway of the world, and so  
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,  
That to divide is not to take away.  
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
Gazing on many truths; Narrow  
The heart that loves, the spirit that creates  
One object, and one form, and builds thereby  
A sepulchre for its eternity.

K

Dear Fanny – God forbid we should what people call ‘settle’, turn into a pond, a stagnant Lethe – better be unprudent moveables than prudent fixtures. If we love we must not live as other men and women do – I cannot brook the wolfsbane of fashion and foppery and tattle...if you can smile in people's faces and wish them to admire you *now* you never have or ever will love me...for God's sake save me – or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you...No, my sweet Fanny - I am wrong. I do not want you to be unhappy – and yet I do...the very thing I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who *can* help it? O the torments!...There's the thrush again! – I can't afford it – he'll run me up a pretty Bill for music!

C

Alas, the love of Women! it is known  
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;  
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,  
And if 'tis lost, Life hath no more to bring  
To them but mockeries of the past alone

B

And their revenge is as the tiger's spring  
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet as real  
Torture is theirs – what they inflict they feel.

S

They are right, for Man, to man so oft unjust  
Is always so to women: one sole bond  
Awaits them – treachery is all their trust -

B

Taught to conceal their bursting hearts despond  
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust  
Buys them in marriage –

K

and what rests beyond?

S

A thankless husband –

C

- next, a faithless lover –

ALL Then dressing, nursing, praying – and all's over.

C

The most happy marriage I can picture or imagine to myself would be the  
union of a deaf man to a blind woman.

S

I retain no doubts as to the evils of marriage. Can man be free if woman is a slave?

B

Well – well, the world must turn upon its axis,  
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,  
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,  
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;  
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,  
Fighting, devotion, dust – perhaps a name.

K

Fame, like a wayward Girl, will still be coy  
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,  
But makes surrender to some thoughtless Boy,  
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;  
She is a Gypsy, will not speak to those  
Who have not learnt to be content without her;  
Ye love-sick Bards, repay her scorn for scorn,  
Ye Artists lovelorn, madmen that ye are !  
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,  
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

B

...Fortune, to be sure, is a female, but not such a bitch as the rest  
(*aside to Shelley*) -always excepting your wife and my sister from such sweeping  
terms - I have no spite against her, though between her and Nemesis I have had  
some sore gauntlets to run – but then I have done my best to deserve no better.

Here's a sigh for those who love me,  
And a smile to those who hate;  
And whatever sky's above me  
Here's a heart for every fate.

C

My father made the world his confidant with respect to his learning and  
ingenuity, and the world seems to have kept the secret very faithfully. His various

works, uncut, unthumbed, have been preserved free from all pollution. This piece of good luck promises to be hereditary; for all *my* compositions have the same amiable *home-studying* propensity.

S I wonder why I write verses , for nobody reads them.

B

Who would write who had anything better to do?

K

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
 Before high piled books, in charactry,  
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;  
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,  
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
 And think that I may never live to trace  
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
 That I shall never look upon thee more,  
 Never have relish in the fairy power  
 Of unreflecting love; - then on the shore  
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

B

Tomorrow is my birthday –I shall have completed thirty and three years of age!!! – and I go to my bed with a heaviness of heart at having lived so long, and to so little purpose...A man who is lame of one leg is in a state of bodily inferiority which increases with years and must render his old age more peevish and intolerable – in another existence I expect to have *two* if not *four* legs by way of compensation.

C

I can see clearly that I have done too much, yet not enough. I have been obliged to omit so many links, from the necessity of compression, that what remains looks like the fragments of the winding steps of an old ruined tower...Lamb told me: "cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, banish elaborateness"...but too often I have omitted to disentangle the weed from fear of snapping the flower.

B

My restlessness tells me I have something within that "passeth show"...

I look

Around a world where I seem nothing, with  
 Thoughts which arise within me, as if they  
 Could master all things.....

S (to Keats)

I have lately read your "*Endymion*" again, and even with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion.

K

I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor poem...there were too many Miltonic inversions in it...In *Endymion*, I leaped headlong into the Sea, and thereby

have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands & the rocks than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. Alas, the book might have emerged in Timbuctoo with more chance of fame and approbation. My circumstances gather like clouds. I received the copy of your Cenci ....I too have written a play –Otho the Great – a successful opening night at Drury Lane , with Kean in it....

S

I have hopes for Cenci at Drury Lane, with Kean in it! - I have no dramatic talent but I took the resolution to see what kind of a tragedy a person without dramatic talent could write.....Lord Byron has read to me one of the unpublished Cantos of Don Juan – which is astonishingly fine – it sets him not above, but far above all the poets of the day: every word has the stamp of immortality...

B I am glad you like it. I was half mad during the time of its composition-between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies; I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the pleasure it would have given to my mother-in-law; and, even *then*, if I could have been certain to haunt her... I have about a hundred stanzas of a Third Canto – but it is damned modest – the outcry has frightened me –The truth is that IT IS TOO TRUE. I had such projects for the Don – but the Cant is so much stronger than Cunt – now a days – that the benefit of my experience as a man who has well weighed the worth of both monosyllables must be lost to posterity.

C

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....

We receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does nature live,  
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud..

K

“I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your loveliness (Fanny), and the hour of my death ..O that I could have possession of them both at the same minute. I hate the world: it batters too much the wings of my self-will, and I could take a sweet poison from your lips to send me out of it....”

*(coughs)*

S Come to Italy for your health. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done...I do not think that young and amiable poets are at all bound to gratify its taste...

K

We will go at once to Rome. I know my end approaches, and the continual visible tyranny of this government prevents me from having any peace of mind. I could not lie quietly here. I will not leave even my bones in the midst of this despotism. I am in that temper that if I were under water I would scarcely kick to come to the top.

**B**

*(Writing a letter)* Hear the carriage – order pistols and greatcoat, as usual – necessary articles. Weather cold – carriage open, and inhabitants somewhat savage – rather treacherous and highly inflamed by politics...The republican uprising has failed...Alas, the Italians must now return to making operas...I fear *that* and macaroni are their forte...There is in fact no law or government at all in Italy – and it is wonderful how well things go on without them...That son of a bitch Southey spreads it about that Shelley and I have formed a league of Incest – and practice our precepts &c – he lies like a rascal – for they are not sisters – there is no promiscuous intercourse – I have nothing to do with the offspring of Mary Wollstonecraft – my commerce being limited to carnal knowledge of the Miss Clairmont!....If a girl of eighteen comes prancing to you at all hours – there is but one way.... Clock strikes – going out to make love. Somewhat perilous, but not disagreeable.

*K (letter to Fanny)*....God bless you my sweet love! Illness is a long lane, but I see you at the end of it and shall mend my pace as well as possible....You are always new. The last of your kisses was ever the sweetest; the last smile the brightest; the last movement the gracefulest...I cannot bear the pain of being happy...my mind is in a tremble, I cannot tell what I am writing...O what it is to have an intellect in splints!....I should like to cast the die for love or death...I fear I am too prudent for a dying kind of lover....

*B (another letter)* Venice is by no means the most *moral* city in the universe – Young and old, pretty and ugly, high and low, are employed in the laudable practice of lovemaking! It is not expensive - I keep four horses on one of the islands and about fourteen servants - I have my gondola ( a sort of black velvet coffin encased in a canoe) - in the two years I have been here I have spent about five thousand pounds – no great deal, particularly when I tell you that more than half was laid out on the sex – to be sure I had plenty for the money – I think at least two hundred of one sort or another – perhaps more, for I have not lately kept the recount.....PS -If you say that I must sign the bonds I suppose that I must – but it is very iniquitous to make me pay my debts – you have no idea of the pain it gives one!

**S**

*(letter)* Lord Byron has splendid apartments in the house of his mistress' husband, who is one of the richest men in Italy. She is sentimental, innocent and superficial – but Italian women for the most part are the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted of all who exist under the moon...and Lord Byron is familiar with the lowest sort – the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He allows fathers and mothers to bargain with him for their daughters, & though this is common in Italy, yet for an Englishman to encourage such sickening vice is a melancholy thing. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait & physiognomy of man & who do not scruple to avow practices which are not only not named but I believe seldom even conceived in England, He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is not yet Italian & is heartily & deeply discontented with himself.

**B**

*(letter)* Now we are in the Dardanelles waiting for a wind to proceed to Constantinople. This morning I swam from Sestos to Abydos; the immediate distance is not above a mile but the current renders it hazardous, so much so that I doubt whether Leander's conjugal powers must not have been exhausted in his passage to Hero's Paradise. The only vestige of Troy, or her destroyers, are the barrows supposed to contain the carcasses of Achilles, Antilochus, Ajax, etc, but Mt Ida is still in high feather, though the shepherds are nowadays not much like Ganymede...

**S**

*(letter)* Geneva....the wind gradually increased in violence, until it blew tremendously; and as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves of a frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. I felt in this near prospect of death a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine.

**B** If you can't swim, beware of Providence!

**S** We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;  
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,  
Streaking the darkness radiantly! – yet soon  
Night closes round, and they are lost forever

**C**

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings  
Give various response to each varying blast,  
To whose frail frame no second motion brings  
One mood or modulation like the last

**K**

We rest – A dream has power to poison sleep;  
We rise – One wandering thought pollutes the day;  
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;  
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away

**B**

It is the same! – For be it joy or sorrow,  
The path of its departure still is free:  
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;  
Nought may endure but Mutability.

If I live ten years longer, you will see, however, that it is not over with me – I don't mean in literature, for that is nothing; and it may seem odd enough to say, I do not think it my vocation. But you will see that I will do something or other – the times and fortune permitting – that, “like the cosmogony, or creation of the world, will puzzle the philosophers of all ages”...But I doubt my constitution will hold out...I've exorcised it most devilishly....

**K**

*(another cough)*...I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop of blood is my death warrant. I must die.

**S**

Young Keats, whose *Hyperion* showed so great a promise, died lately at Rome from the consequences of breaking a blood-vessel, in paroxysms of despair at the contemptuous attack on his book in the *Quarterly Review*.

**B**

'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,  
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

**C**

Few die of a *broken heart*, and these few (the surgeons tell us) know nothing of it; and, dying suddenly, leave to the dissector the first discovery.

**B**

I did not approve of Keats' poetry or principles of poetry –but as he is dead....His *Hyperion* is a fine monument & will keep his name.

**K**

I have left no immortal work behind me – nothing to make my friends proud of my memory – but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things and I feel confident I should have been a rebel Angel had the opportunity been mine.....

“Here lieth One whose name was writ on water”

**S** In all probability I shall be overwhelmed by one of the tempests forever traversing this pathless wilderness....

Why have the secret powers of this strange world  
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither  
On direst storms?

**K:**

Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,  
Who shall put forth on thee,  
Unfathomable Sea?

**S**

I have a kind of optimism for the future – there is nothing which the human mind cannot conceive which it may not execute...in everything any man ever wrote, spoke, acted or imagined is contained, as it were, the allegorical idea of his own future life, as the acorn contains the oak.....

Every atom is sentient in unity and part...  
Even the minutest molecule of light  
Fulfils its destined though invisible work..  
This is the winter of the world..  
The seeds are sleeping in the soil.....  
...and Man is Prometheus....  
...all things confess his strength –  
The lightning is his slave;  
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;  
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare –

Heaven , hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none!  
*(smiles)*.....I always go on until I am stopped – and I never am stopped!  
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
 And whiten the green plains under,  
 And then again I dissolve in rain  
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.....  
 It is a modest creed and yet  
 Pleasant, if one considers it,  
 To own that death itself must be  
 Like all the rest, a mockery....

I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called *verse*, but I have not, nor cannot hope to have.....

**B**

Shelley alone, in this age of humbug, dared to stem the current, although I could not observe he made any progress. The attempt is better than being swept along as the rest are, with the filthy garbage ....

If thou regret'st thy youth, why live?  
 The land of honourable death  
 Is here: up to the field and give  
 Away thy breath!

I am trying to reunite the Greeks, especially as the Turks are expected in force, and that shortly. If Greece wants to become forever free, true and independent she had better decide now, or never again will she have the chance, never again...

The World's at war with tyrants – shall I crouch?  
 Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear –  
 Its echo in my heart –

...the use of trumpets may be doubted, unless Constantinople were Jericho! But '*En Avant!*' I was a fool to come here but it is proper I should remain – it were better to die doing something than nothing...

For Freedom's battle once begun  
 Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son  
 Though baffled oft is ever won....

**C**

I have my epitaph ready penned :  
 STOP, Christian passer-by! – Stop, child of God,  
 And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod  
 A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he.  
 O, lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.;  
 That he who many a year with toil of breath  
 Found death in life, may here find life in death!  
 Mercy for praise – to be forgiven for fame  
 He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ. Do thou the same.

**K**

My friends should drink a dozen of Claret on my tomb.

**B**

Tis vain to struggle – let me perish young –

Live as I lived, and love as I have loved!  
 To dust if I return, from dust I sprung –  
 ....Is there anything in the future than can possibly console us for not being always  
 twenty-five?

**C**

Though nothing can bring back the hour  
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;  
 We will grieve not, rather find  
 Strength in what remains behind;  
 In the primal sympathy  
 Which having been must ever be;  
 In the soothing thoughts that spring  
 Out of human suffering;  
 In the faith that looks through death,  
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.  
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.  
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

**K**

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
 Its loveliness increases; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways  
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits.....  
 ....My having written that argument will perhaps be of the greatest service to me of  
 anything I ever did.

**S**

..... the poet and the man are two different natures; though they exist together they  
 may be unconscious of each other...as to whether or not I ever *was* a poet, that  
 decision is removed from the present time to the hour when our posterity shall  
 assemble: but the court is a very severe one, & I fear that the verdict will be guilty...

I met a traveler from an antique land  
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
 Stand in the desert...Near them, on the sand,  
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
‘My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!’  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

.....