





# TWELVE SEASONS

**POETRY BY ETON LANGFORD**

**Twelve Seasons (2002)**  
**From High Crests (2001)**  
**A Place to Bloom (2000)**

# TWELVE SEASONS

ETON LANGFORD

Irving Poetry Press

2002

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ISBN-10: 1530657105

ISBN-13: 978-1530657100

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# DEDICATION

TO MEN whose quest to end all wars  
Can kindle hope in those adrift  
Or help them to align the stars,  
I now present this humble gift.

Eton Langford



## NARROW ROAD

I'VE travelled gladly down a narrow road  
Which leads to peace and quiet, though I swear  
That I have also borne a large and heavy load  
Whose crown of lead is hard indeed to wear.

When I emerged, at last, from deep within  
The deadly forest, suddenly I saw  
That I had reached a place where I had been  
When I had not yet learned my reason's flaw.

I sat in wonder as I judged how fast  
My life had trickled by beneath the sun,  
But then I chased away and scorned the past  
And felt content about the trip on which I'd gone.

## BEAUTY'S CALL

THE CONSTELLATIONS rise and set,  
The waves soar high and fall  
While mermaids spread their artful net  
To answer beauty's call.

The forest's mantle longs to fade,  
The ship of childhood sails  
When lovers grasp that they were made  
To merge their lonesome trails.

The weight of life then thirsts for rain,  
The night awaits the moon  
Though man attempts to trade, in vain,  
Life's evening for its noon.

# OCEAN OF THE PAST

ONE DAY, all living things might fill  
The ocean of the past  
And every ship, against our will,  
Could bear a broken mast.

That day, when no one's left to know  
Of Satan and of God,  
Our giant star shall burst and sow  
A diadem of blood.

The relics of our ancient world  
Shall sleep in ageless ice,  
Or else burn bright as they are hurled  
To seal our sacrifice.

## CRUEL DILEMMAS

COOL DROPS of water fall upon the rock  
And slowly carve their way toward the sea  
Much as existence, hastened by the clock,  
Unfolds its wings, undaunted, soaring free.

Strange fancies yearn to take their flight and leave  
The pit of slow, monotonous decay,  
Though human will must bear its toil and grieve  
While bound to shackles smothering their prey.

The beasts unleashed by nature never know  
The cruel dilemmas baffling every mind  
Held prisoner by worldly rules to grow  
In covenants long settled by the blind.

The price of freedom rarely can be paid  
While thoughts are trapped by reason in their cage,  
Where nightmares and the arms of dread are made,  
Though fear can't turn a fool into a sage.

And, thus, existence lingers in the dust  
From one illusion onward to the next,  
While precious time and youthful looks are lost  
And freedom is irreparably vexed.

## RESTLESS WILL

OH, SOLEMN harmony of lonesome waves  
Whose power tolls the bell of dreams!  
Your passion's voice of rising freedom braves  
All force whose will unfolds resentful streams!

The longing for past lives—though fading—may,  
Below the burning sky, adopt a rhyme  
Which wilts unseen by light or life, whose way  
To weave the calm of night may challenge time.

Concealed by shades of mingled coatings worn  
And shed away by hope's inheritor,  
The epitaph of peace is sadly born  
To be death's first and last progenitor.

Once-undefeated powers have declined  
To naught since dormant seas of madness swelled  
To drown the child of time, who wrote and signed  
The edict bound to rouse all hate unquelled.

The pageantry of amity and praise  
Forever haunts the idle brain, whose guess  
At cryptic answers forms the endless maze  
Which human reason struggles to possess.

A wordless anthem favored by the gods  
Is chanted round the ocean's living frame  
While Jove is hurling off his lightning rods,  
Whose architects bear neither form nor name.

The cold, dark bosom of the gloomy tomb  
Where gold is stolen from the lifeless crowd  
Is stained with blood by creeping ghosts, whose doom  
Is all but certain, clarioned aloud.

The shimmer borne by rapturous delight  
When gentle verses nourish, ever still,  
The spirits of indomitable might  
Sings, loud and clear, the Graces' restless will.

Below the clouds, uprisen then upturned,  
The breeze within the forest of the damned  
Grows ill and faint, its voice forever spurned  
Beneath the spread of trees, where wraiths are banned.

The ruthless wolves, whose rage was freed  
To crawl for freedom, now are old and tame  
Like man's deep yearning to transcend time's lead.  
In such a world, what demons shall I blame?

## REMINISCENCE

WHAT OTHERS saw in you was age  
And wrinkles drawn by time and worry,  
Yet I remember well the stage  
When your quaint beauty knew no hurry.

You were then young and I a child  
Who ran into your arms and laughed.  
I fancied life forever mild,  
Yet now I write your epitaph.

But now your days have run their course  
And I must live and stay behind.  
Oh, how could I amass the force  
In such a world my rest to find?

## CONSOLATION

THOUGH CONSOLATION by the pledge of hope  
May grow within my heart at quiet hours,  
Or may unveil to me its candid scope  
As bees bring news of joy which could be ours,  
Though, languidly, I gaze upon the spread  
Of stars whose old romance is twinned in me  
By ancient heroes of whose quests I've read  
Or heard before their failings I could see,  
Though I recall the candid play of chance—  
Whose sly intrigues have brought our paths so near—  
And cheer my days despite our years' advance,  
Which hide their shadows to delay my fear,  
I lie and gaze into the night until  
I care for neither solace nor the quill.

# LUNA'S SEPT

*a tribute to the high Romantics*

DESCEND TO join me now in Luna's sept  
Before the summer storm's pale vision  
Disturbs the bed of glory where you slept  
And sighed at passing time's derision!

Arise and sow your wonder over hills  
Where free birds can outlast the wingless,  
And grass unweaves so gently over rills  
Whose timeless flow is quick and listless!

Unending hours advance while tearing off  
Astrologers' ill fancies, deader  
Than fragments wrought and torn away by scoff,  
Whose broken vows are hope's beheader.

All envy shrinks while you are like the spell  
Which thaws cold marble into living  
Decay. Descend, illumine our moon-beamed dell,  
Where memories can foil misgiving!

## MYTH

AN ORPHANED paradise where wounded feet  
Must hymn the breath which gave it life and light  
Despairs for harmonies which subtly meet  
In whirlpools where bright genii wake to fight.

Asleep along the foaming shore there lie  
Two citadels whose strong foundations greet  
A conscience winged in victory, which flies  
Above this land where will and passion meet.

An islet, solitudinous and mute,  
Has harbored, for a thousand years, a man  
Whose life has flown on wings of plaintive lute  
While thirsting for the world from which he ran.

On promontories whence he peers aloof  
Toward the azure sphere of mortal drift,  
He mourns his youth, his joy and treasured roof  
Where he received his first and dearest gift.

How could he leave and then to Earth descend?  
Though he was blessed with endless life and sight  
Of what betides his kin where Death attends,  
He pines to see the sun's absolving light.

With bashful moves and longing, he comes down  
From his abode to where he meets the edge  
Of Life's demesne, created with a frown  
To wear dull immortality's sharp edge.

He peers below, where lovers live in peace,  
And takes a step across dark heaven's brink,  
While angels shudder as their fears increase:  
Their master's jaunt may cause the realm to sink.

His gaze observes the world around, yet not  
A sight presents itself to sate his thirst,  
For—long ago—the race of men forgot  
His name and will, and all his writs reversed.

Though mortals bow their heads, they do not know  
What power has descended to their realm  
And, as he looks around, they flee and grow  
Alarmed at what they cannot overwhelm.

Yet one disdainful face comes forth and grins  
While clasping the old master's haloed head:  
"You fool!"—cries Death—"You want men for their sins!"  
His scythe then lashes off and God is dead.

## PROGRESS

I STILL recall when life was slow  
In quaint and little towns,  
But now my own, which I best know,  
In noise and tantrum drowns.

When but a boy, I could walk free  
Along the quiet streets,  
Where flowers donned each house and tree.  
How fast such beauty fleets!

Today, the dragon-like great beast  
Of progress on attack  
Disturbs and kills shy nature's feast:  
I want her silence back.

## VISION OF SAPPHO

BEFORE A pagan shrine, a witch reveals the gods' desire  
And sees a cryptic vision cloaked in her enormous pyre:

The blazes have the wit of lightning born of rain and fire  
And magically filled with deep, eternal knowledge brought  
To life on laden summits swept by ancient songs of Troy.  
Her Delphic incantation saved the fallen poet's lyre  
And came to sink intrigues inwrought astutely with the thought  
Bewitched on fields of war by ancient wizards' spells and ploy.

Men can avoid dark potions made of poisoned weeds,  
And erudite disdain from tortured debtors of the skies  
Ensure that passion-winged crusaders risen from abyss  
Can spread their handsome virtues over young, unruly seeds.  
They bring the sovereign power trumpeted by nimble flies  
Upon all fancies hurled to nothingness by thoughts amiss.

The oxen of the Sun are resting under Doric watch  
And, suddenly, near Sappho's ancient cave of dreams, the fount  
Of noble manhood births a youth whose eyes deceive the minds  
And souls of gods and goddesses. They hope to best or match  
This witch-like poetess of Aphrodite, whose high mount  
Has lured them deep within her lair, where Arne's beauty blinds.

In wine, incense and smoke, such truths Apollo's priestess finds  
And sows bright hope and pride in Greece's fearful minds.

## ANOTHER WORLD

A LONELY lighthouse beamed upon by rays of moonlight stands  
Above the restless sea, whose vapors spill upon the sands.  
The nymphs of water courses rise to taste the soothing night,  
Whose drowsy watch invites the stars to spread their limpid light.  
The leaves of life are tossed and hurled across the forest's floor  
While sounds of Autumn start to knock at prideful Summer's door.

The castle's hallways lie asleep, although a tower's pane  
Begins to glint below the light of candles, making plain  
A noble visage full of youth whose eyes behold the waves  
With restless passion, while the mind a distant beauty craves.

Afar, the longed-for soul, consumed itself by love, is lying still  
Upon a small and humble bed, divining heaven's will  
And fickle mood, whose edict once divided rich and poor  
Despite their longings born of love which pains them all the more.

Although they're young and full of hope, it will not take much time  
For human vice and narrow minds to make their love a crime.  
The years will pass, the candles burn—much faster than they think—  
And, long before their hearts can tell, their view of life shall sink.

They will be summoned—nay, enticed—their feelings to abscond  
And then pretend that they had never been enamored all along.  
The cruel old men must die below—the wicked gods above—  
Before the world recalls that Jove stole Ganymede for love.  
And then another age shall rise like Venus from the sea,  
When all are free to sing their joy and claim their right to be.

## ANCHORED CITIES

HURLED AFAR, a scepter wrought by careless gods  
Plunges down to Neptune's dark and deep abyss,  
Where the fickle ruler grins with greed and nods  
While young sailors fail to dodge his deadly kiss.

Anchored cities plead that mariners return;  
Skies obscure the ocean's bleak and daring flow,  
Haunted unavailingly from depths whose glow  
Spreads its maledictions cast from Hades' urn.

Amorous, triumphant fancies come to fill  
Noble annals which Atlantis never knew,  
Truthed by victories whose sapphire, wanton hue  
Wakes the restful morn while seagulls voice their will.

They, of all the mortal forms whose budding smile  
Holds men's dreams in cages where their wings are clipped,  
Strayed from earth to steal the loveliness they sipped,  
Awed and speechless, while they sought to speed their trial.

Seeking passage though they are, the cloak of youth  
Hides the slumber woven by their music's pride  
Deep within the snows of Atlas, mute and wide,  
Soft like moss and spread on valleys broad and smooth.

## MACHINERIES

MACHINERIES ARE made within the form  
Of their creators, be they young or old,  
And are indeed expected to perform  
At their designers' wish and in their mould.  
The world's most cruel creatures, I well know,  
Yield little worth preserving, for their minds  
Are children born of Hades' vilest flow,  
Whose horrid sight both youths and sages blinds.  
Though from fair creatures we desire increase,  
The most insensate ones are quite adept  
At breeding free of bound, though nature's lease  
To man on earth such crime should not accept.  
How fast the horde of lunacy can swell  
Predicts how soon the world might birth a living Hell.

## ART'S TOIL

WHAT GOOD is love when time has fled,  
What good is time if love has run?  
Once Venus flees her darling's bed,  
She wilts away, her powers gone.

Our lofty monuments fulfill  
Our needs far longer than the hands  
Which carve the wood with clever skill  
To quell the muses' high demands.

All beauty is for here and now,  
And yet the toil of art is worth  
Far more than passion can endow  
The strength and poise to bear it forth.

## WORDS TO WINE

WHEN COLOURS pouring from the sky  
Pretend, in passing, to be free  
Of memories which want to tie  
Me down, I smile and let them flee.

The faded paint of long ago  
Was washed away by children's hands  
Before the blinding wind and snow  
Had come in waves from foreign lands.

I asked my shadow in what way  
I might avoid its plainest trails,  
Yet it had not a thing to say;  
The cranes were voicing haunting wails.

I thus decided it was time  
To leave my barren crib behind,  
And walk along a straighter line  
Until some restful place I'd find.

At last I came across a field  
Where Spring had left behind a sign  
That she would soon return to wield  
Her right to turn my words to wine.

Since no one could besiege me there,  
I sat in silence by a tree  
And mustered all that I could bear  
To set myself, like colours, free.

## WONTON LOVE

I'M no poor man unless I give away  
What life and beauty owe me more than most,  
Although I do not fear that I would ever stray  
From love of which I'd sooner dream than boast.  
When all which perishes is born again  
To hold me near my memory of you,  
I look away, though never would I feign  
What might inspire my words and make them true.  
A tree grows fair with age despite the leaves  
Which fall into forgetfulness at first,  
Whereas your eyes change colour when the thieves  
Of wonton love make hearts suspire with thirst.  
What came before—and surely you forgot—  
Is that which, once, with many tears, I bought.

## HEAVEN'S SONG

A CRYPTIC vision wrought with stubborn skill at music's bidding stands  
Untamed by wingèd thought beneath the sun's dominion.  
It moves like summer's wind, diaphanous and warm,  
Within the labyrinth of earth and sea,  
Where birds with golden feathers fly  
Like sun-kissed gems whose spark  
Could blind the moon's  
Weak sight.  
The light  
Of afternoons  
When nature's creatures hark  
To heaven's song makes angels try  
The taste of mortal love. For once, they see  
What pleasures wait to be discovered, though the form  
Of bliss on earth may not disturb their god's oblivion  
Of what he made. At work in this must be some clever, wicked hands.

## IN DEBT

ONE LIFE you gave me as a gift,  
And yet I never knew  
That I could ever show more thrift  
With love where it was due.

For all I have, I am in debt  
To many, though to you  
I am obliged enough to let  
Your hopeful dreams accrue.

## NEPTUNE'S REALM

MASTED CASTLES crown the mountains  
Hidden by the brackish sea,  
Where a string of boiling fountains  
Dot the ever-spreading lea.

Leafless forests of the deep,  
Visited by swimming birds,  
Serve as sailors' place to sleep,  
Roamed by mute, abyssal herds.

Neptune's armies stride undaunted  
While his mammoths plunge and rise,  
One of which bewitched and haunted  
Ahab to his swift demise.

## SUMMER'S EVE

OF MANY things which I would once proclaim  
I cannot now assert that I am fond,  
Although there still remains a pleasant name  
With which I am in everlasting bond.  
The skittish rose announcing summer's eve  
Is but the first of all too many more,  
And yet I cannot, true to conscience, leave  
To fate a gem I've never seen before.  
Before too long, the field of love is full  
With many flowers prouder than the first,  
But such am I: I find all treasures dull  
If time enshrines a passion I have nursed.  
No matter when my heart might crave repose,  
I can't forget the name of that first rose.

## UNIVERSAL KEY

ALL BEAUTY grows and ripens by divine effect  
When hearts are opened with a universal key  
Though, when man hurries nature to perfect,  
He must pay fast and dearly her most humbling fee.  
If summer's coin is held in winter's keep  
And morning's light is sold to evening's grey,  
The blade of folly leads blue eyes to weep  
While roses grow sharp thorns to lure their prey.  
The vain gratuities of which you are so fond  
Do nothing but to lengthen your distress  
And to dissolve our weak and fragile bond  
Whose long decay we struggle to confess.  
The fox his golden coat in winter might bemoan,  
Though he's still glad, unseen, to freely roam.

## INNER REALM

THE MIND retains its visions of the past  
Like humble seeds of memories outspread  
On barren fields and, though they last  
Through time, by other hands they're nursed and fed.

Where they were planted, often, we forget  
Until our thought, inquisitive to see  
What came of them, recalls the debt  
Which, once, was owed to it as fee

For giving life to their descendants' line.  
When, though, the place these seeds were left  
Is found, at last, not seeds but trees and fine  
Expanses clothed by forests in the cleft

Of mountains fill the view. At once, the mind  
Is much surprised that what it left behind  
Has altered all within itself, to blind  
Pure reason in a labyrinth whose paths can wind

And lead awareness where it never knew  
There was a trail to find. By this device,  
Our inner realm is made a mystery and few  
Are those whose sight can peer upon it twice.

## ZEPHYRS

WITHIN ONE day I live much more  
Than in twelve seasons, all combined,  
And thus I've learned how to ignore  
What could oppress a wearied mind.

I have been summoned back to light  
From a deep slumber of the will  
And know that, if I cease to fight,  
My cup of tears will count for nil.

I raise my head, I look around,  
But find myself a child again,  
As if I never have been bound  
By visions which ensnare the brain.

I have been gifted a new form  
And freed of troubles I have known;  
It is a chance to be reborn  
Of other lives and live my own.

Since birth, I've been the rush of springs  
Which makes the blood of nature flow;  
I roam upon the tireless wings  
Of zephyrs where they chance to go.

## SUMMER'S CORE

A BUD has blossomed in sweet summer's core;  
A fairy tale has started in the realms of lore.  
A seed has landed on auspicious ground;  
A chick has burst in thrills of happy sound.

The waves have swelled at nature's candid bid;  
The gloomy rain has closed her weeping lid.  
The joy of life has dared to grow on thee;  
The kiss of love has blessed and summoned me.

## ENEMY OF JOY

NO ENEMY of joy is left to see  
How balmy sleep envelops us anew,  
As sand and foam are gathered by the sea  
In an array of sparkling gold and blue.  
Within the realm of fantasy there is  
A calm oasis waiting to be found,  
And he who claims the prize to make it his  
Can find repose and succor without bound.  
If I, instead, prefer to stay with you  
And leave aside the quests of yesterday,  
I pay the penance which is always due  
When man decides to keep his heart at bay.  
    Though I may try to leave the world behind,  
    Your voice and call still linger in my mind.

## GUILLESS LIFE

A LOFTY thought beholds itself within the luscious mirror  
Created from the limpid tears which fell from high above  
And washed away the sad remembrance sown by dying error.  
A sparkling rainbow reigns in hues of red and blue and mauve.

The sleeping soul of immortality awakes anew  
To charm the world in voiceless tones of growing light and song,  
For both the slaves and masters of the sky, at last, renew  
Their pledge of freedom which had lain asleep for far too long.

The chains of mortal shape are broken with the might of kings  
Before the burning altar kept by angels' legions spread  
Above the clouds, above the blinding sun, with tireless wings.  
The mass of guileless life is now with nectar duly fed.

A blinding light has kindled all the universe, and soon  
The hungry passions of unfettered love will burst aloud  
Where nothing but the grip of joy enshrouds the rising moon  
On waves of guiltless wind, beneath each white and sparkling cloud.

The sun is mild, the planets lure the stars to spread their shine  
Upon the clear and softly-flowing amber of their clouds,  
While younger Earths emerge anew—as in their glowing prime—  
And stronger men rise forth among the bright and youthful crowds.

# SPRING OF CREATION

*a tribute to Sappho*

SHORT ARE journeys when, in the thralls of passion,  
Lovers climb the mountains of boundless pleasure,  
Reaching lofty peaks in unbridled fashion,  
Free of all measure.

Then, a force invoked by the blissful senses  
Swells the boiling spring of creation nearing  
Swift eruption. Suddenly, fire advances  
Fast and unfearing.

## EARTH'S CALL

A TREE'S old branches grew toward the sky  
And sought to touch the moon in her ascent.  
His aim was too elusive to defy  
Earth's call, so then the tree more gladly lent  
His crown to nightingales, which sang on high,  
With gratefulness, their passions tree-ward bent.

## LAST JOY

AN ANCIENT castle's rowdy crowds were thinned  
By war and famine. Once its fortress fell  
To fire, its people left it to the wind.  
In time, the spirit of its aging well

Perceived the surging danger of decay  
Which mired his quiet will to live within  
The lonesome corner where his stonework lay.  
Soon, shadows stretched between him and his kin

Along the merry valleys. Then, one day,  
The winds of long ago began to fade  
And many birds began to run away  
From winter's frozen curse, and gladly made

Their nests in trees that quenched their silent thirst  
Around the dying well, which gladly gave  
His breath of life and cradled up the first  
Bright hopes in generations. Thus, the wave

Of solitude began to cede its space  
To greener leaves of future joy and, soon,  
The castle's walls—now donned in ivied lace—  
Became an altar to a rare and sweet perfume

Which spread its scent afar beyond the sea.  
On sensing this, the spirit blessed the ways  
Of his ancestral home and, glad to see  
Such joy, he breathed away his final days.

## OTHER WORLDS

IN OTHER worlds we could exist  
If only we released the weight  
Which keeps us well within the mist  
And hides our freedom's gate.

Yet when the liquid words pour down  
Like grace notes scribbled on a score,  
I am inclined to don the gown  
Of new-found hope and ask for more.

The strain is lifted thus, though clouds  
Are playing far beyond my reach,  
Whereas your voice my own enshrouds  
While seagulls fly across the beach.

## RETURN FROM AFAR

A DECADE slipped away before I saw again  
The quiet streets where I'd grown up.  
The trees' cool shade was gone, and all that did remain  
Seemed tarnished and corrupt.

I sat upon the bench where friends and I would meet  
To laugh and play our boyish game.  
Another crowd now filled the place, and the defeat  
I felt could bear no proper name.

The joys I once had cherished were beyond all sight  
And lingered only in my mind,  
But I was glad that I was there, intent to write  
Of what I'd been allowed to find.

## URNS OF STONE

TWO SPRINGS of colour, red and green,  
Are rushing down the mountain  
While blending in with the unseen.

One soft and long, the other rough,  
They both descend with fervor,  
As if their speed were not enough.

The firs are watching by, all mute.  
No birds are seen disturbing  
These torrents, stern and resolute.

Beheld by clouds above, they rise  
To ever greater heights of  
Quiet splendor, restful in their size.

Could one mould time in urns of stone  
    To watch its stillness growing  
So that no creature is alone?

I cannot fathom Nature's aim  
    Yet, in my bursts of passion,  
I still reach out to watch her flame.

## TREE-HIGH NEST

I WANT to have a tree-high nest  
Where silence does not cease,  
And leave the rest  
At peace.

While there, I'll dream of birds and fays  
Without the care of time,  
And live my days  
In rhyme.

The summer's heat will roll a-swing  
To visit my abode  
And gently sing  
Her ode.

The winter cold shall never touch  
My heart while I am there,  
At ease in such  
A lair.

The ages of the world shall pass  
Like shadows in a dream  
Whose colored glass  
Beads gleam.

## GANYMEDE

A SOMBER dome protected fondly from the heights  
Of solitude by hawkish eyes was found at length  
By Jupiter in his relentless storm of lights.  
In there lay, hidden from all view, a youth whose strength  
And beauty could ensorcel any heart and spark long fights  
    Among all those who'd lay their eyes  
    Upon a gem which all restraint defies.

The master of the heavens, in a show of skill,  
Engulfed the tower in a ceaseless rain of gold  
To kidnap fair-eyed Ganymede and then, at will,  
To bring this shepherd to Olympus, in a bold  
Attempt his fondest wishes to fulfill.  
    And thus, borne high on eagle's wings,  
    A lad outdid the fame of kings.

## TO A MOCKINGBIRD

I AM within and you without:  
You're in your nest and I in mine.  
Though we are different, there's no doubt  
That we both suffer, love and pine.

Tomorrow brings both pain and joys  
And we must both confront the world,  
To which we're but two living toys  
Which play a game of hot and cold.

We crave infinity, and yet  
We're both alive for little time  
Although, somehow, our peace we've met:  
You in your song and I in rhyme.

## FORGIVENESS

FORGIVE ME, now that love is gone  
And that long years obscure the sun!  
When mem'ries fill my eyes, I see  
That our short time is nearly done.

For long, I claimed to understand  
What precious stone lay in my hand  
But now, bereft of time, I sigh  
As waves of sadness kiss the sand.

Deceitful Time shall close your eyes  
While whispering his clever lies,  
And I will stay behind and weep  
Until his will my own defies.

## TWICE INJURED

WHAT LIES well hidden in your heart  
Is there because you knew I'd weep  
To hear that I had played a part  
In your torment within the deep.

If I had been then truly wise  
To understand your love for me,  
I would have never let the rise  
Of sorrow maim your will to be.

You were twice injured, thrice deceived,  
And I should have sustained you through  
Your days of anguish when, aggrieved,  
You bowed your head, though pure and true.

Our time went by unfelt and I  
Regret the errors of my past  
As I am left behind to sigh:  
These hours and days may be your last.

## MAPLE TREES

I WANT to be alone with you  
Beneath the shade of maple trees  
And offer love where love is due  
Without time's unforgiving fees.

I want to sleep on summer nights  
Within a castle's ancient walls  
And wake with you to see the lights  
Of fireflies by the waterfalls.

I want to see the cherries bloom  
When winter paves the way to spring  
And clouds of rain make ample room  
To nature's bards, who play and sing.

I want no quarrel with the world,  
And far from it my thoughts are borne  
When my sweet dreams are warm and furled  
In bliss with neither weight nor form.

I want a place beneath the stars,  
Where I can peer into the void,  
To places where there are no wars  
Or where my fate I could avoid.

## BED OF LEAVES

AN EARLY shadow fills the void  
And winds spread out their lonely call  
Where many nights I once enjoyed  
And rain foretells an early fall.

You were with me full long ago;  
We walked across a bed of leaves  
And tried to catch the flakes of snow  
Whose fall bewilders and deceives.

Since then, much time has come and passed  
And only memories remain,  
But I still wonder if I'd last  
Outside their rich and vast domain.

## TO DIE, TO LIVE

THERE'S never a good time to die  
Unless I know that I have lived  
A simple truth, and not a lie  
Which makes old men regret and sigh.

There's never a good time to live  
Unless the seed of scorn has died  
Or has long withered in the sieve  
Of conscience freed from dire reprieve.

There's never a good time for birth  
Unless I raise myself above  
The greatest pain of little worth  
Which haunts me as I breathe on earth.

## MISTAKE

BEFORE I left you, all I wished  
Was hidden far within,  
As if your love had never been.

I ran away to see the world  
And then forgot your name,  
Although you never did the same.

I then returned and all came back—  
My memories of you—  
While you were steadfast, good and true.

I found you waiting, keeping watch—  
And praying I'd return—  
Without a candle left to burn.

And then I sensed my grave mistake  
Of leaving you behind,  
Of being youthful, rash and blind.

I feared your punishment, but you  
Said nothing, while your tears  
Ran down your cheeks and quelled my fears.

## FAINT HOPE

FAINT HOPE, forgotten long ago,  
Has risen from inside  
And broken free to shine and grow  
Like sea waves stretching wide.

It lay within, unknown until  
I dared to bring it out  
To sing its song and voice its will,  
All free and all about.

I nearly let it die alone  
Within my darkest dream,  
Until I heard its limpid tone  
And saw its lucid gleam.

I'm now much gladder and relieved  
Of burden and of needs  
Which hurt far more than I believed  
And sowed pernicious seeds.

The world is free again, at last,  
To take me in its fold,  
Before the void's long shadow's cast  
To cage me in the cold.

## SIMPLE LIFE

A SIMPLE life is good enough:

There is much peaceful beauty  
In modesty, once man can laugh  
At trouble born of duty.

Full long ago a pilgrim was

Condemned to endless sailing,  
But then he learnt the end and cause  
Of all his bitter wailing.

He turned to search for rest and grace

Far off from his old heading,  
And found his peace in a calm place  
Whence endless waves were spreading.

He thought of sharing with all men

The story of his travel,  
But found that what befits the pen  
Can shatter and unravel

The riddles he had chanced to solve  
Throughout his quest and yearning,  
And that mere words could not dissolve  
Thick layers deep with yearning.

He stood upon a cliff and wept  
To know he lacked the power  
To free the knowledge he had kept  
In life's remotest tower.

Alike, though there are old men who  
Have solved their greatest riddle,  
Their strength to speak may vanish too  
Once fear begins to middle.

## ONCE A STAR

WAIL YOURSELF away, o heart,  
Far away from home and love;  
Wail, but strive to soar above  
To the sky's eternal art!

We ourselves were once two stars,  
Long before we had divined  
That the fate we'd been assigned  
Would inflict us grievous scars.

If we'd known the things to come,  
We might have remained on high,  
Where we could have spurned the sigh  
Whose dull weight we've overcome.

Now together, you and I  
Must rebuild our house of joy,  
And derail the sordid ploy  
Which deceives the callow eye.

In the chambers of the mind  
We will find a place to dwell  
Where our hope, renewed, will quell  
Passions vain and left behind.

## ALL THE LETTERS

ALL THE letters are now lost,  
    Fallen down the slope of time,  
And their record has been tossed  
    Without reason, sense or rhyme.

From the summit of the mountain  
    To the bottom of the sea  
There is not a single fountain  
    Which might quench their thirst to be.

All is thought to have been written,  
    Some remembered and much lost  
To forgiveness, deeply bitten  
    By time's serpent, hate or frost.

What is destined for surviving  
    In the annals of our age  
May not have the gift of thriving  
    On the lips of bard and sage.

To the darkness of our morrow  
Times of glory must be fated  
Like most memories of sorrow,  
Whether bright and new or dated.

## FAREWELL TO THE ABYSS

UNSPOILED, YOUR blinding beams much willingly deceive  
The wanting eye whose tremor grasps the light of day,  
Though restless spiders wake quite soon at night to weave  
The icy peaks of lurid mountains turning gray.

But now the sound of crumbling words is growing old  
While doors may open wide to show the way  
To newer lands made true despite the cold  
And wintry touch of every star's dim ray.

Farewell! The promised shore has risen from the deep,  
Where truth and beauty squirm in thirst for rain,  
Unheard by any but by stars, who weep  
At summer's edge, strung forth on skies of pain.

Though you may turn your eye to me, the end  
For every wishful dream is set to come  
Far sooner than our summer's fall, whose blend  
Of love and strife has cleaved our budding sum.

Farewell to the abyss and to the crests  
Where love, unconquered, stood unmoved by time  
On her auroral throne, where longing nests  
And grows shy words from childhood to their prime!

## TEARS OF RHYME

THE NIGHT is old, the candle spent,  
My mind anew to worries lent,  
The air is cold, the moon serene,  
My heart laid bare of things I've seen.

Your memory is rising high  
And though I struggle to defy  
Your calls across the vale of time,  
My thoughts condense as tears of rhyme.

And thus I carry on, unsure  
Of whether I could ask for more  
From you or me, with heavy breath  
Whose weight I'll carry to my death.

## SUMMER'S QUEEN

THE FAIRIES brew  
Cool autumn dew  
In ancient trees  
With swarms of bees.

The leaves fall down,  
All red and brown,  
To mark the loss  
Of trees on moss.

The clouds move west  
And seek their rest  
On mountain clines  
With ripened vines.

The waters deep  
Fall fast asleep  
Below the sky  
Spread out on high.

The night awakes  
Above the lakes  
And reigns supreme  
As summer's queen.

The birds sit tight  
While starry light  
Begins to flow  
Like opals' glow.

The rills grow mute  
When sounds of lute  
Begin to pray  
For friends away.

The woods lie still  
To hear the trill  
Of mockingbirds  
Agasp for words.

They sing to you  
Of sky-lit blue  
And chirp to me  
Of destiny,

For here you are:  
A tear, a star,  
A dream, a dove:  
Eternal love.

## ETERNAL MIDNIGHT

ETERNAL MIDNIGHT fills the springless plain  
Of summer lost where passion dares not go  
And where absolving fall must die or feign  
Unnatural distress at winter's blow.

The eyelids of the wise are sown with grief  
To save slow mankind from the truth of night,  
And then renew the pledges of the thief  
Or to divine the outcome of his fight.

No matter where the seed of day is borne  
By winds of mindless changes wrought by time,  
Its soul of stone dies slowly, though it's torn  
From leafless trees to clean the earth of grime.

The stronghold of the helpless claims, at last,  
All never-seen, long shadows as its own,  
As sly deceit begins to haunt the vast,  
Dry empire of remembrance being sown.

Tomorrow waits impatiently, while man  
Has little need or knowledge of its will,  
And all which toil can muster barely can  
Advance his cause, which surely counts for nil.

