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*Complete Poems*





## Imitation of Spenser\*

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,  
And her first footsteps touched a verdant hill;  
Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,  
Silv'ring the untainted gushes of its rill;  
Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distil,  
And after parting beds of simple flowers,  
By many streams a little lake did fill,  
Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,  
And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright 10  
Vying with fish of brilliant dye below;  
Whose silken fins and golden scales light  
Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow:  
There saw the swan his neck of archèd snow  
And oared himself along with majesty;  
Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show  
Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,  
And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah, could I tell the wonders of an isle 20  
That in that fairest lake had placèd been,  
I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;  
Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen!\*

For sure so fair a place was never seen,  
Of all that ever charmed romantic eye:  
It seemed an emerald in the silver sheen  
Of the bright waters – or as when on high,  
Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cerulean sky.

And all around it dipped luxuriously  
Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,  
Which, as it were in gentle amity, 30  
Rippled delighted up the flowery side;  
As if to glean the ruddy tears, it tried,  
Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem!  
Haply it was the workings of its pride,  
In strife to throw upon the shore a gem  
Outvying all the buds in Flora's diadem.\*

## On Peace\*

O Peace, and dost thou with thy presence bless  
The dwellings of this war-surrounded isle,  
Soothing with placid brow our late distress,  
Making the triple kingdom brightly smile?  
Joyful I hail thy presence, and I hail  
The sweet companions that await on thee;  
Complete my joy – let not my first wish fail,  
Let the sweet mountain nymph thy favourite be,  
With England's happiness proclaim Europa's liberty.  
O Europe, let not sceptred tyrants see  
That thou must shelter in thy former state;  
Keep thy chains burst, and boldly say thou art free;  
Give thy kings law – leave not uncurbed the great;  
So with the horrors past thou'lt win thy happier fate!

10

## “Fill for Me a Brimming Bowl”\*

*What wondrous beauty! From this moment  
I efface from my mind all women.*

TERENCE\*

Fill for me a brimming bowl  
And let me in it drown my soul:  
But put therein some drug, designed  
To banish woman from my mind:  
For I want not the stream inspiring  
That heats the sense with lewd desiring,  
But I want as deep a draught  
As e'er from Lethe's waves was quaffed;  
From my despairing breast to charm  
The image of the fairest form  
That e'er my revelling eyes beheld,  
That e'er my wandering fancy spelled.

10

'Tis vain! Away I cannot chase  
The melting softness of that face,  
The beamingness of those bright eyes,  
That breast – earth's only paradise.

My sight will never more be blessed,  
For all I see has lost its zest,  
Nor with delight can I explore  
The classic page, the Muse's lore.

20

Had she but known how beat my heart,  
And with one smile relieved its smart,  
I should have felt a sweet relief,  
I should have felt "the joy of grief".\*  
Yet as a Tuscan mid the snow  
Of Lapland thinks on sweet Arno,  
Even so for ever shall she be  
The halo of my memory.

### To Lord Byron\*

Byron, how sweetly sad thy melody!  
Attuning still the soul to tenderness,  
As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,  
Had touched her plaintive lute, and thou, being by,  
Hadst caught the tones, nor suffered them to die.  
O'ershading sorrow doth not make thee less  
Delightful: thou thy griefs dost dress  
With a bright halo, shining beamily,  
As when a cloud a golden moon doth veil,  
Its sides are tinged with a resplendent glow,  
Through the dark robe oft amber rays prevail,  
And like fair veins in sable marble flow;  
Still warble, dying swan, still tell the tale,  
The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing woe!

10

“As from the Darkening Gloom  
a Silver Dove”\*

As from the darkening gloom a silver dove  
Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light,  
On pinions that naught moves but pure delight,  
So fled thy soul into the realms above,  
Regions of peace and everlasting love;  
Where happy spirits, crowned with circlets bright  
Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,  
Taste the high joy none but the blest can prove.  
There thou or joinest the immortal choir  
In melodies that even heaven fair  
Fill with superior bliss, or, at desire  
Of the omnipotent Father, cleavest the air  
On holy message sent – what pleasures higher?  
Wherefore does any grief our joy impair?

10

“Can Death Be Sleep, When Life  
Is but a Dream”\*

I

Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,  
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?  
The transient pleasures as a vision seem,  
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

II

How strange it is that man on earth should roam  
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake  
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone  
His future doom, which is but to awake.

## To Chatterton\*

O Chatterton, how very sad thy fate!  
Dear child of sorrow – son of misery!  
How soon the film of death obscured that eye  
Whence Genius wildly flashed and high debate.  
How soon that voice, majestic and elate,  
Melted in dying murmurs! Oh, how nigh  
Was night to thy fair morning! Thou didst die  
A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts amate.\*  
But this is past: thou art among the stars  
Of highest heaven: to the rolling spheres  
Thou sweetly singest – naught thy hymning mars,  
Above the ingrate world and human fears.  
On earth the good man base detraction bars  
From thy fair name, and waters it with tears.

10

## Written on the Day that Mr Leigh Hunt Left Prison\*

What though, for showing truth to flattered state,  
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,  
In his immortal spirit, been as free  
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.  
Minion of grandeur, think you he did wait?  
Think you he naught but prison walls did see,  
Till, so unwilling, thou unturned'st the key?  
Ah, no, far happier, nobler was his fate!  
In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers fair,  
Culling enchanted flowers, and he flew  
With daring Milton through the fields of air:  
To regions of his own his genius true  
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair  
When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

10

## To Hope\*

When by my solitary hearth I sit,  
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;  
When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye"\* flit,  
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom;  
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,  
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,  
Should sad Despondency my musings fright  
And frown to drive fair Cheerfulness away, 10  
Peep with the moonbeams through the leafy roof,  
And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,  
Strive for her son to seize my careless heart,  
When like a cloud he sits upon the air,  
Preparing on his spellbound prey to dart,  
Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,  
And fright him as the morning frightens night!

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear  
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow, 20  
O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer;  
Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow:  
Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,  
From cruel parents or relentless fair,  
Oh, let me think it is not quite in vain  
To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air!  
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head! 30

In the long vista of the years to roll,  
Let me not see our country's honour fade:  
Oh, let me see our land retain her soul,

ODE TO APOLLO

Her pride, her freedom – and not freedom’s shade.  
From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed –  
Beneath thy pinions canopy my head!

Let me not see the patriot’s high bequest,  
Great Liberty – how great in plain attire! –  
With the base purple of a court oppressed,  
Bowing her head and ready to expire,  
But let me see thee stoop from heaven on wings  
That fill the skies with silver glitterings!

40

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star  
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud,  
Brightening the half-veiled face of heaven afar,  
So when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,  
Sweet Hope, celestial influence round me shed,  
Waving thy silver pinions o’er my head.

Ode to Apollo\*

In thy western halls of gold,  
When thou sittest in thy state,  
Bards, that erst sublimely told  
Heroic deeds and sung of fate,  
With fervour seize their adamantine lyres,  
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires.

There Homer with his nervous\* arms  
Strikes the twanging harp of war,  
And even the western splendour warms,  
While the trumpets sound afar:  
But, what creates the most intense surprise,  
His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

10

Then, through thy temple wide, melodious swells  
The sweet majestic tone of Maro’s lyre:\*  
The soul delighted on each accent dwells –  
Enraptured dwells – not daring to respire,  
The while he tells of grief around a funeral pyre.



'Tis awful silence then again,  
 Expectant stand the spheres,  
 Breathless the laurelled peers, 20  
 Nor move till ends the lofty strain,  
 Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease  
 And leave once more the ravished heavens in peace.

Thou biddest Shakespeare wave his hand,  
 And quickly forward spring  
 The Passions – a terrific band –  
 And each vibrates the string  
 That with its tyrant temper best accords,  
 While from their master's lips pour forth the inspiring words.

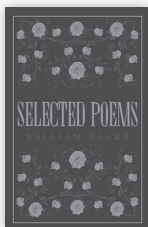
A silver trumpet Spenser blows, 30  
 And, as its martial notes to silence flee,  
 From a virgin chorus flows  
 A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.  
 'Tis still! Wild warblings from the Aeolian lyre  
 Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers  
 Float along the pleasèd air,  
 Calling youth from idle slumbers,  
 Rousing them from Pleasure's lair –  
 Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move, 40  
 And melt the soul to pity and to love.

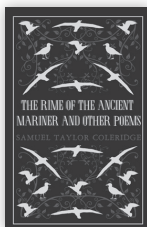
But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine\*  
 And all the powers of song combine,  
 We listen here on earth:  
 The dying tones that fill the air  
 And charm the ear of evening fair,  
 From thee, great god of bards, receive their heavenly birth.

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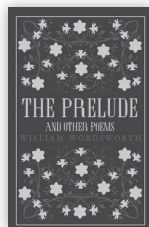
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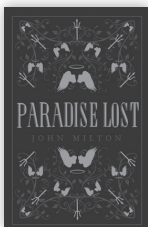
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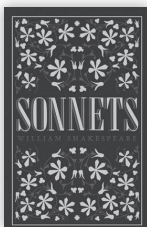
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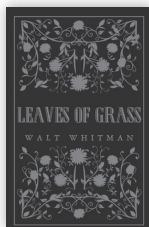
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