

English 2202

Selected Victorian Poetry: Tennyson, Browning,  
Arnold and Rossetti

Dover Beach (1842)  
Matthew Arnold

THE SEA is calm to-night.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.       5  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,       10  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago   15  
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.                       20

The sea of faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,                       25  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-winds, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems                       30  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain                       35  
Swept with confus'd alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Memorial Verses (1850)  
Matthew Arnold

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,  
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.  
But one such death remain'd to come;  
The last poetic voice is dumb—  
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.                       5

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,  
We bow'd our head and held our breath.  
He taught us little; but our soul  
Had felt him like the thunder's roll.  
With shivering heart the strife we saw 10  
Of passion with eternal law;  
And yet with reverential awe  
We watch'd the fount of fiery life  
Which serv'd for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said: 15  
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.  
Physician of the iron age,  
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.  
He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear: 20  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said: Thou ailest here, and here!  
He look'd on Europe's dying hour  
Of fitful dream and feverish power;  
His eye plunged down the weltering strife, 25  
The turmoil of expiring life—  
He said: The end is everywhere,  
Art still has truth, take refuge there!  
And he was happy, if to know  
Causes of things, and far below 30  
His feet to see the lurid flow  
Of terror, and insane distress,  
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth!—Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!  
For never has such soothing voice 35  
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,  
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade  
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come  
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.  
Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye, 40  
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!  
He too upon a wintery clime  
Had fallen—on this iron time  
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.  
He found us when the age had bound 45  
Our souls in its benumbing round;  
He spoke, and loos'd our hearts in tears.

He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth,  
Smiles broke from us, and we had ease; 50  
The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;  
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.  
Our youth return'd; for there was shed  
On spirits that had long been dead, 55  
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,  
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light  
 Man's prudence and man's fiery might,  
 Time may restore us in his course 60  
 Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;  
 But where will Europe's latter hour  
 Again find Wordsworth's healing power?  
 Others will teach us how to dare,  
 And against fear our breast to steel; 65  
 Others will strengthen us to bear—  
 But who, ah! who, will make us feel?  
 The cloud of mortal destiny,  
 Others will front it fearlessly—  
 But who, like him, will put it by? 70  
 Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,  
 O Rotha, with thy living wave!  
 Sing him thy best! for few or none  
 Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

Ulysses (1833)  
 Alfred Tennyson

IT little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me. 5  
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
 Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
 That lov'd me, and alone; on shore, and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10  
 Vex'd the dim sea. I am become a name;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known: cities of men  
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them all; 15  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20  
 For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life pil'd on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me 25  
 Little remains: but every hour is sav'd  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.  
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-lov'd of me, discerning to fulfil 35  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.  
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, 45  
 Souls' that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and oppos'd  
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;  
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil; 50  
 Death closes all; but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep 55  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
 'T is not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.  
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' 65  
 We are not now that strength which in old days  
 Mov'd earth and heaven, that which we are, we are:  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

### My Last Duchess (1842)

Robert Browning

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
 Looking as if she were alive. I call  
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands  
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said 5  
 "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read  
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not  
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps 15  
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps  
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint  
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
 Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff  
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20  
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
 A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad.  
 Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, 25  
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
 The bough of cherries some officious fool  
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each  
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30  
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked  
 Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked  
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill 35  
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will  
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this  
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,  
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let  
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40  
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,  
 —E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose  
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; 45  
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50  
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Goblin Market (1859)  
 Christina Rossetti

Morning and evening  
 Maids heard the goblins cry:

'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
 Come buy, come buy:  
 Apples and quinces, 5  
 Lemons and oranges,  
 Plump unpecked cherries,  
 Melons and raspberries,  
 Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,  
 Swart-headed mulberries, 10  
 Wild free-born cranberries,  
 Crab-apples, dewberries,  
 Pine-apples, blackberries,  
 Apricots, strawberries;—  
 All ripe together 15  
 In summer weather,—  
 Morns that pass by,  
 Fair eves that fly;  
 Come buy, come buy:  
 Our grapes fresh from the vine, 20  
 Pomegranates full and fine,  
 Dates and sharp bullaces,  
 Rare pears and greengages,  
 Damsons and bilberries,  
 Taste them and try: 25  
 Currants and gooseberries,  
 Bright-fire-like barberries,  
 Figs to fill your mouth,  
 Citrons from the South,  
 Sweet to tongue and sound to eye; 30  
 Come buy, come buy.'

Evening by evening  
 Among the brookside rushes,  
 Laura bowed her head to hear,  
 Lizzie veiled her blushes: 35  
 Crouching close together  
 In the cooling weather,  
 With clasping arms and cautioning lips,  
 With tingling cheeks and finger tips.  
 'Lie close,' Laura said, 40  
 Pricking up her golden head:  
 'We must not look at goblin men,  
 We must not buy their fruits:  
 Who knows upon what soil they fed  
 Their hungry thirsty roots?' 45  
 'Come buy,' call the goblins  
 Hobbling down the glen.  
 'Oh,' cried Lizzie, 'Laura, Laura,  
 You should not peep at goblin men.'  
 Lizzie covered up her eyes, 50  
 Covered close lest they should look;  
 Laura reared her glossy head,  
 And whispered like the restless brook:  
 'Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,  
 Down the glen tramp little men. 55  
 One hauls a basket,  
 One bears a plate,

One lugs a golden dish  
 Of many pounds weight. 60  
 How fair the vine must grow  
 Whose grapes are so luscious;  
 How warm the wind must blow  
 Through those fruit bushes.'  
 'No,' said Lizzie, 'No, no, no;  
 Their offers should not charm us, 65  
 Their evil gifts would harm us.'  
 She thrust a dimpled finger  
 In each ear, shut eyes and ran:  
 Curious Laura chose to linger  
 Wondering at each merchant man. 70  
 One had a cat's face,  
 One whisked a tail,  
 One tramped at a rat's pace,  
 One crawled like a snail,  
 One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry, 75  
 One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.  
 She heard a voice like voice of doves  
 Cooing all together:  
 They sounded kind and full of loves  
 In the pleasant weather. 80

Laura stretched her gleaming neck  
 Like a rush-imbedded swan,  
 Like a lily from the beck,  
 Like a moonlit poplar branch,  
 Like a vessel at the launch 85  
 When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen  
 Turned and trooped the goblin men,  
 With their shrill repeated cry,  
 'Come buy, come buy.' 90  
 When they reached where Laura was  
 They stood stock still upon the moss,  
 Leering at each other,  
 Brother with queer brother;  
 Signaling each other, 95  
 Brother with sly brother.  
 One set his basket down,  
 One reared his plate;  
 One began to weave a crown  
 Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown 100  
 (Men sell not such in any town);  
 One heaved the golden weight  
 Of dish and fruit to offer her:  
 'Come buy, come buy,' was still their cry.  
 Laura stared but did not stir, 105  
 Longed but had no money:  
 The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste  
 In tones as smooth as honey,  
 The cat-faced purr'd,  
 The rat-faced spoke a word 110  
 Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;

One parrot-voiced and jolly  
Cried 'Pretty Goblin' still for 'Pretty Polly';—  
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste: 115  
'Good folk, I have no coin;  
To take were to purloin:  
I have no copper in my purse,  
I have no silver either,  
And all my gold is on the furze 120  
That shakes in windy weather  
Above the rusty heather.'  
'You have much gold upon your head,'  
They answered all together:  
'Buy from us with a golden curl.' 125  
She clipped a precious golden lock,  
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,  
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:  
Sweeter than honey from the rock,  
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine, 130  
Clearer than water flowed that juice;  
She never tasted such before,  
How should it cloy with length of use?  
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more  
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore; 135  
She sucked until her lips were sore;  
Then flung the emptied rinds away  
But gathered up one kernel stone,  
And knew not was it night or day  
As she turned home alone. 140

Lizzie met her at the gate  
Full of wise upbraidings:  
'Dear, you should not stay so late,  
Twilight is not good for maidens;  
Should not loiter in the glen 145  
In the haunts of goblin men.  
Do you not remember Jeanie,  
How she met them in the moonlight,  
Took their gifts both choice and many,  
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers 150  
Plucked from bowers  
Where summer ripens at all hours?  
But ever in the noonlight  
She pined and pined away;  
Sought them by night and day, 155  
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;  
Then fell with the first snow,  
While to this day no grass will grow  
Where she lies low:  
I planted daisies there a year ago 160  
That never blow.  
You should not loiter so.'  
'Nay, hush,' said Laura:  
'Nay, hush, my sister:  
I ate and ate my fill, 165

Yet my mouth waters still;  
 To-morrow night I will  
 Buy more:' and kissed her:  
 'Have done with sorrow;  
 I'll bring you plums to-morrow 170  
 Fresh on their mother twigs,  
 Cherries worth getting;  
 You cannot think what figs  
 My teeth have met in,  
 What melons icy-cold 175  
 Piled on a dish of gold  
 Too huge for me to hold,  
 What peaches with a velvet nap,  
 Pellucid grapes without one seed:  
 Odorous indeed must be the mead 180  
 Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink  
 With lilies at the brink,  
 And sugar-sweet their sap.'

Golden head by golden head, 185  
 Like two pigeons in one nest  
 Folded in each other's wings,  
 They lay down in their curtained bed:  
 Like two blossoms on one stem,  
 Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,  
 Like two wands of ivory 190  
 Tipped with gold for awful kings.  
 Moon and stars gazed in at them,  
 Wind sang to them lullaby,  
 Lumbering owls forbore to fly,  
 Not a bat flapped to and fro 195  
 Round their rest:  
 Cheek to cheek and breast to breast  
 Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning  
 When the first cock crowed his warning, 200  
 Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,  
 Laura rose with Lizzie:  
 Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
 Aired and set to rights the house,  
 Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat, 205  
 Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,  
 Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
 Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;  
 Talked as modest maidens should:  
 Lizzie with an open heart, 210  
 Laura in an absent dream,  
 One content, one sick in part;  
 One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,  
 One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came: 215  
 They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;  
 Lizzie most placid in her look,  
 Laura most like a leaping flame.

They drew the gurgling water from its deep;  
 Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags, 220  
 Then turning homeward said: 'The sunset flushes  
 Those furthest loftiest crags;  
 Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,  
 No wilful squirrel wags,  
 The beasts and birds are fast asleep.' 225  
 But Laura loitered still among the rushes  
 And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still  
 The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:  
 Listening ever, but not catching 230  
 The customary cry,  
 'Come buy, come buy,'  
 With its iterated jingle  
 Of sugar-baited words:  
 Not for all her watching 235  
 Once discerning even one goblin  
 Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;  
 Let alone the herds  
 That used to tramp along the glen,  
 In groups or single, 240  
 Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, 'O Laura, come;  
 I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:  
 You should not loiter longer at this brook:  
 Come with me home. 245  
 The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,  
 Each glowworm winks her spark,  
 Let us get home before the night grows dark:  
 For clouds may gather  
 Though this is summer weather, 250  
 Put out the lights and drench us through;  
 Then if we lost our way what should we do?'

Laura turned cold as stone  
 To find her sister heard that cry alone,  
 That goblin cry, 255  
 'Come buy our fruits, come buy.'  
 Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?  
 Must she no more such succous pasture find,  
 Gone deaf and blind?  
 Her tree of life drooped from the root: 260  
 She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;  
 But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,  
 Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;  
 So crept to bed, and lay  
 Silent till Lizzie slept; 265  
 Then sat up in a passionate yearning,  
 And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept  
 As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,  
 Laura kept watch in vain 270

In sullen silence of exceeding pain.  
 She never caught again the goblin cry:  
 'Come buy, come buy;'—  
 She never spied the goblin men  
 Hawking their fruits along the glen: 275  
 But when the noon waxed bright  
 Her hair grew thin and grey;  
 She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
 To swift decay and burn  
 Her fire away. 280

One day remembering her kernel-stone  
 She set it by a wall that faced the south;  
 Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,  
 Watched for a waxing shoot,  
 But there came none; 285  
 It never saw the sun,  
 It never felt the trickling moisture run:  
 While with sunk eyes and faded mouth  
 She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees  
 False waves in desert drouth 290  
 With shade of leaf-crowned trees,  
 And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,  
 Tended the fowls or cows,  
 Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat, 295  
 Brought water from the brook:  
 But sat down listless in the chimney-nook  
 And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear  
 To watch her sister's cankerous care 300  
 Yet not to share.  
 She night and morning  
 Caught the goblins' cry:  
 'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
 Come buy, come buy:'— 305  
 Beside the brook, along the glen,  
 She heard the tramp of goblin men,  
 The voice and stir  
 Poor Laura could not hear;  
 Longed to buy fruit to comfort her, 310  
 But feared to pay too dear.  
 She thought of Jeanie in her grave,  
 Who should have been a bride;  
 But who for joys brides hope to have  
 Fell sick and died 315  
 In her gay prime,  
 In earliest Winter time  
 With the first glazing rime,  
 With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling 320  
 Seemed knocking at Death's door:  
 Then Lizzie weighed no more

Better and worse;  
But put a silver penny in her purse,  
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze 325  
At twilight, halted by the brook:  
And for the first time in her life  
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin  
When they spied her peeping: 330  
Came towards her hobbling,  
Flying, running, leaping,  
Puffing and blowing,  
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,  
Clucking and gobbling, 335  
Mopping and mowing,  
Full of airs and graces,  
Pulling wry faces,  
Demure grimaces,  
Cat-like and rat-like, 340  
Ratel- and wombat-like,  
Snail-paced in a hurry,  
Parrot-voiced and whistler,  
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,  
Chattering like magpies, 345  
Fluttering like pigeons,  
Gliding like fishes,—  
Hugged her and kissed her:  
Squeezed and caressed her:  
Stretched up their dishes, 350  
Panniers, and plates:  
'Look at our apples  
Russet and dun,  
Bob at our cherries,  
Bite at our peaches, 355  
Citrons and dates,  
Grapes for the asking,  
Pears red with basking  
Out in the sun,  
Plums on their twigs; 360  
Pluck them and suck them,  
Pomegranates, figs.'—

'Good folk,' said Lizzie,  
Mindful of Jeanie:  
'Give me much and many:'— 365  
Held out her apron,  
Tossed them her penny.  
'Nay, take a seat with us,  
Honour and eat with us,'  
They answered grinning: 370  
'Our feast is but beginning.  
Night yet is early,  
Warm and dew-pearly,  
Wakeful and starry:  
Such fruits as these 375  
No man can carry;

Half their bloom would fly,  
 Half their dew would dry,  
 Half their flavour would pass by.  
 Sit down and feast with us, 380  
 Be welcome guest with us,  
 Cheer you and rest with us.'—  
 'Thank you,' said Lizzie: 'But one waits  
 At home alone for me:  
 So without further parleying, 385  
 If you will not sell me any  
 Of your fruits though much and many,  
 Give me back my silver penny  
 I tossed you for a fee.'—  
 They began to scratch their pates, 390  
 No longer wagging, purring,  
 But visibly demurring,  
 Grunting and snarling.  
 One called her proud,  
 Cross-grained, uncivil; 395  
 Their tones waxed loud,  
 Their looks were evil.  
 Lashing their tails  
 They trod and hustled her,  
 Elbowed and jostled her, 400  
 Clawed with their nails,  
 Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,  
 Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,  
 Twitched her hair out by the roots,  
 Stamped upon her tender feet, 405  
 Held her hands and squeezed their fruits  
 Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,  
 Like a lily in a flood,—  
 Like a rock of blue-veined stone 410  
 Lashed by tides obstreperously,—  
 Like a beacon left alone  
 In a hoary roaring sea,  
 Sending up a golden fire,—  
 Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree 415  
 White with blossoms honey-sweet  
 Sore beset by wasp and bee,—  
 Like a royal virgin town  
 Topped with gilded dome and spire  
 Close beleaguered by a fleet 420  
 Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,  
 Twenty cannot make him drink.  
 Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,  
 Coaxed and fought her, 425  
 Bullied and besought her,  
 Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,  
 Kicked and knocked her,  
 Mauled and mocked her,  
 Lizzie uttered not a word; 430

Would not open lip from lip  
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:  
But laughed in heart to feel the drip  
Of juice that syrugged all her face,  
And lodged in dimples of her chin, 435  
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.  
At last the evil people,  
Worn out by her resistance,  
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit  
Along whichever road they took, 440  
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;  
Some writhed into the ground,  
Some dived into the brook  
With ring and ripple,  
Some scudded on the gale without a sound, 445  
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,  
Lizzie went her way;  
Knew not was it night or day;  
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze, 450  
Threaded copse and dingle,  
And heard her penny jingle  
Bouncing in her purse,—  
Its bounce was music to her ear.  
She ran and ran 455  
As if she feared some goblin man  
Dogged her with gibe or curse  
Or something worse:  
But not one goblin skurried after,  
Nor was she pricked by fear; 460  
The kind heart made her windy-paced  
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste  
And inward laughter.

She cried 'Laura,' up the garden,  
'Did you miss me? 465  
Come and kiss me.  
Never mind my bruises,  
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices  
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,  
Goblin pulp and goblin dew. 470  
Eat me, drink me, love me;  
Laura, make much of me:  
For your sake I have braved the glen  
And had to do with goblin merchant men.'

Laura started from her chair, 475  
Flung her arms up in the air,  
Clutched her hair:  
'Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted  
For my sake the fruit forbidden?  
Must your light like mine be hidden, 480  
Your young life like mine be wasted,  
Undone in mine undoing,  
And ruined in my ruin,

Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?—  
 She clung about her sister, 485  
 Kissed and kissed and kissed her:  
 Tears once again  
 Refreshed her shrunken eyes,  
 Dropping like rain  
 After long sultry drouth; 490  
 Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,  
 She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,  
 That juice was wormwood to her tongue,  
 She loathed the feast: 495  
 Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,  
 Rent all her robe, and wrung  
 Her hands in lamentable haste,  
 And beat her breast.  
 Her locks streamed like the torch 500  
 Borne by a racer at full speed,  
 Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
 Or like an eagle when she stems the light  
 Straight toward the sun,  
 Or like a caged thing freed, 505  
 Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,  
 Met the fire smouldering there  
 And overbore its lesser flame;  
 She gorged on bitterness without a name: 510  
 Ah! fool, to choose such part  
 Of soul-consuming care!  
 Sense failed in the mortal strife:  
 Like the watch-tower of a town  
 Which an earthquake shatters down, 515  
 Like a lightning-stricken mast,  
 Like a wind-uprooted tree  
 Spun about,  
 Like a foam-topped waterspout  
 Cast down headlong in the sea, 520  
 She fell at last;  
 Pleasure past and anguish past,  
 Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.  
 That night long Lizzie watched by her, 525  
 Counted her pulse's flagging stir,  
 Felt for her breath,  
 Held water to her lips, and cooled her face  
 With tears and fanning leaves:  
 But when the first birds chirped about their eaves, 530  
 And early reapers plodded to the place  
 Of golden sheaves,  
 And dew-wet grass  
 Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,  
 And new buds with new day 535  
 Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,

Laura awoke as from a dream,  
Laughed in the innocent old way,  
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;  
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey, 540  
Her breath was sweet as May  
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years  
Afterwards, when both were wives  
With children of their own; 545  
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,  
Their lives bound up in tender lives;  
Laura would call the little ones  
And tell them of her early prime,  
Those pleasant days long gone 550  
Of not-returning time:  
Would talk about the haunted glen,  
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,  
Their fruits like honey to the throat  
But poison in the blood; 555  
(Men sell not such in any town:)  
Would tell them how her sister stood  
In deadly peril to do her good,  
And win the fiery antidote:  
Then joining hands to little hands 560  
Would bid them cling together,  
'For there is no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather;  
To cheer one on the tedious way,  
To fetch one if one goes astray, 565  
To lift one if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.'