

## The Cloud

P. B. SHELLEY

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
From the seas and the streams;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noon-day dreams.  
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet buds every one,  
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
As she dances about the Sun.  
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
And whiten the green plains under,  
And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And their great pines groan aghast;  
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,  
Lightning my pilot sits;  
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
It struggles and howls at fits;  
Over Earth and Ocean, with gentle motion,  
This pilot is guiding me,  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea;  
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
Over the lakes and the plains,  
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
The Spirit he loves remains;  
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,  
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
When the morning star shines dead;  
As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
An eagle alit one moment may sit  
In the light of its golden wings.  
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit Sea beneath,

Its ardours of rest and of love,  
And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
From the depth of Heaven above,  
With wings folded I rest, on mine æery nest,  
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden  
Whom mortals call the Moon,  
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor  
By the midnight breezes strewn;  
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
Which only the angels hear,  
May have broken the woof, of my tent's thin roof,  
The stars peep behind her, and peer;  
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
Like a swarm of golden bees,  
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,  
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone  
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;  
The volcanos are dim and the stars reel and swim  
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
Over a torrent sea,  
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof –  
The mountains its columns be!  
The triumphal arch, through which I march  
With hurricane, fire, and snow,  
When the Powers of the Air, are chained to my chair,  
Is the million-coloured Bow;  
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove  
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,  
And the nursling of the Sky;  
I pass through the pores, of the ocean and shores;  
I change, but I cannot die –  
For after the rain, when with never a stain  
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,  
Build up the blue dome of Air –

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, live a ghost from the tomb,  
I arise, and unbuild it again.

## The Moon

P. B. SHELLEY

### I.

AND, like a dying lady lean and pale,  
Who totters forth, wrapp'd in a gauzy veil,  
Out of her chamber, led by the insane  
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,  
The moon arose up in the murky east  
A white and shapeless mass.

### II.

Art thou pale for weariness  
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,  
Wandering companionless  
Among the stars that have a different birth,  
And ever changing, like a joyless eye  
That finds no object worth its constancy?

## The Lady of Shalott

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

### Part I

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And through the field the road runs by  
    To many-towered Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Through the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,  
Slide the heavy barges trailed  
By slow horses; and unhailed  
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed  
    Skimming down to Camelot:  
But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
    Down to towered Camelot:  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
    Lady of Shalott."

## Part II

There she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
    To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,

Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
    Winding down to Camelot:  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,  
    Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,  
    Goes by to towered Camelot;  
And sometimes through the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two:  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often through the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
    And music, went to Camelot:  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed;  
"I am half sick of shadows," said  
    The Lady of Shalott.

### Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
    Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
    Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot:  
And from his blazoned baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burned like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often through the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;  
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flowed  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flashed into the crystal mirror,  
"Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces through the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She looked down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror cracked from side to side;  
"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

#### Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over towered Camelot;  
Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse,  
Like some bold seer in a trance  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Through the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot:  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darkened wholly,  
Turned to towered Camelot.  
For ere she reached upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?

And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they crossed themselves for fear,  
    All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, "She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
    The Lady of Shalott."

### **Charge of the Light Brigade**

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

1.

Half a league, half a league,  
    Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
    Rode the six hundred.  
"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
"Charge for the guns!" he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
    Rode the six hundred.

2.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
    Someone had blunder'd:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
    Rode the six hundred.

3.



Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
    Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
    Rode the six hundred.

4.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
    All the world wonder'd:  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre stroke  
    Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
    Not the six hundred.

5.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
    Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
    Left of six hundred.

6.

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wondered.  
Honor the charge they made,  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred.

### Ode to Autumn

JOHN KEATS

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,  
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, –  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-cricket sing, and now with treble soft  
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

## Ode to a Nightingale

JOHN KEATS

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 thine happiness,  
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South!  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stainèd mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs;  
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
Already with thee! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

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 musèd 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 same that ofttimes hath  
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?

### Ode on a Grecian Urn

JOHN KEATS

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
For ever panting, and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
What little town by river or sea-shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?  
And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell  
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

### **Home Thoughts, from Abroad**

ROBERT BROWNING

O, to be in England  
Now that April 's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees, some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf  
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
In England – now!

And after April, when May follows,  
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!  
Hark, where my blossom'd pear-tree in the hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge –  
That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,

Lest you should think he never could recapture  
The first fine careless rapture!  
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
The buttercups, the little children's dower  
– Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

### Vision of Belshazzar

LORD BYRON

#### I

The King was on his throne,  
The Satraps throng'd the hall;  
A thousand bright lamps shone  
O'er that high festival.  
A thousand cups of gold,  
In Judah deem'd divine –  
Jehovah's vessels hold  
The godless Heathen's wine!  
In that same hour and hall,  
The fingers of a hand  
Came forth against the wall,  
And wrote as if on sand:  
The fingers of a man; –  
A solitary hand  
Along the letters ran,  
And traced them like a wand.

#### II

The monarch saw, and shook,  
And bade no more rejoice;  
All bloodless wax'd his look,  
And tremulous his voice.  
"Let the men of lore appear,  
The wisest of the earth,  
And expound the words of fear  
Which mar our royal mirth."  
Chaldea's seers are good,

But here they have no skill;  
And the unknown letters stood  
Untold and awful still.  
And Babel's men of age  
Are wise and deep in lore;  
But now they were not sage,  
They saw – but knew no more.

### III

A captive in the land,  
A stranger and a youth,  
He heard the king's command,  
He saw that writing's truth.  
The lamps around were bright,  
The prophecy in view;  
He read it on that night, –  
The morrow proved it true.  
"Belshazzar's grave is made,  
His kingdom pass'd away,  
He, in the balance weighed,  
Is light and worthless clay.  
The shroud, his robe of state,  
His canopy the stone;  
The Mede is at his gate!  
The Persian on his throne!"

### Piano

D. H. LAWRENCE

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;  
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see  
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling  
strings  
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as  
she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song  
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong  
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside



And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour  
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour  
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast  
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the  
past.