

CLASSICISM – THE AGE of REASON

Excerpts from "*An Essay on Criticism*"

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."
(lines 215-216)

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance."
(lines 362-363)

Excerpt from "*An Essay on Man, Epistle I*"

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest."
(lines 95-96)

Excerpt from "*Moral Essays, Epistle I*"

"'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."
(lines 149-150)

from An Essay on Man

Alexander Pope

— Know then thyself,^o presume not God to scan;^o
— The proper study of mankind is man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,^o
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
5 With too much knowledge for the skeptic^o side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,^o
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
10 Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still^o by himself abused, or disabused;^o
15 Created half to rise, and half to fall:
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

1. **Know . . . thyself:** a moral precept of Socrates and other ethical philosophers. **scan:** pry into; speculate about.

3. **middle state:** that is, having the rational intellect of angels and the physical body of beasts.

5. **skeptic:** The ancient Sceptics doubted that humans can gain accurate knowledge of anything. They emphasized the limitations of human knowledge.

6. **Stoic's pride:** The ancient Stoics' ideal was a calm acceptance of life and an indifference to both pain and pleasure. Stoics are called proud because they refused to recognize human limitations.

14. **still:** always; continually. **disabused:** undecieved

THE ROMANTIC AGE

1798-1832

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
 Of moral evil and of good,
 Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings:
 Our meddling intellect
 Missshapes the beauteous forms of things—
 We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
 Close up those barren leaves;
 Come forth, and bring with you a heart
 That watches and receives.

from "The Tables Turned"
William Wordsworth

It Is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free

William Wordsworth

LANGUAGE OF LIT.

George Gordon, Lord Byron →
 "Apostrophe to the Ocean" p. 77
 Heinrich Heine →
 "Lotus Blossom Covers" p. 795

1 [It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
 5 [The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
 2 [Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 3 [Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
 10 [If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom¹ all the year;
 4 [And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold

William Wordsworth

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky:
 So was it when my life began;
 So is it now I am a man;
 So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die!
 1 [The child is father of the Man;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.¹

1. natural piety: Devotion to nature.

1. Abraham's bosom: Heaven (Luke 16:22).

PERRINE

Shelley → "Ozymandias" p. 704
 Blake → "A Poison Tree" p. 907
 "The Sick Rose" "The Lamb" p. 940
 p. 737 "The Tyger" p. 947
 Wordsworth → "I Wandered
 Lonely as a Cloud" p. 1019
 Keats → "La Belle Dame sans Merci" p. 975
 "Bright Star" p. 721

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

John Keats

Much have I traveled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo^o hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;^o
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene^o
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;^o
Or like stout Cortez^o when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

She Walks in Beauty

George Gordon, Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes^o and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect^o and her eyes:
5 Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

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

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

2. climes: atmospheres: climates.

4. aspect: face: look.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

John Keats

I

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan¹ historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
5 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe² or the dales of Arcady?³
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?⁴
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
10 What pipes and timbrels?⁵ What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual⁶ ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
15 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,
20 Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
25 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
30 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

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 dressed?
35 What little town by river or seashore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets forevermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
40 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.



V

O Attic⁷ shape! Fair attitude! with brede⁸
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,⁹
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
45 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
50 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

O sweet spontaneous

E. E. Cummings

A O sweet spontaneous
earth how often have
the
doting

5 fingers of
prurient philosophers pinched
and
poked

10 thee
.has the naughty thumb
of science prodded
B thy

15 beauty .how
often have religions taken
thee upon their scraggy knees
squeezing and

C buffering thee that thou mightest conceive
gods
(but
20 true

D to the incomparable
couch of death thy
rhythmic
lover

25 thou answerest

E them only with
spring)

Question and Answer Among the Mountains

Li Po

translated by Robert Kotewall and Norman L. Smith

You ask me why I dwell in the green mountain;
I smile and make no reply for my heart is free of care.
As the peach-blossom flows down stream and is gone into **(A)**
the unknown,
I have a world apart that is not among men. **(B)**

Word-Pattern

Li Po

translated by Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell

The Autumn wind is fresh and clear;
The Autumn moon is bright.
Fallen leaves whirl together and scatter.
The jackdaws, who have gone to roost, are startled again.
We are thinking of each other, but when shall we see each other? **(C)**
Now, tonight, I suffer, because of my passion. _____

To Tan-Ch'iu

Li Po

translated by Arthur Waley

My friend is lodging high in the Eastern Range,
Dearly loving the beauty of valleys and hills.
At green Spring he lies in the empty woods,
And is still asleep when the sun shines on high.
A pine-tree wind dusts his sleeves and coat: **(D)**
A pebbly stream cleans his heart and ears.
I envy you, who far from strife and talk
Are high-propped on a pillow of blue cloud. **(E)**

In-Class Essay The Romantic Age

Directions: Please read the following poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you discuss how such elements as imagery, *figurative* language (personification, apostrophe), structure and sound convey meaning in the poem.

To Autumn

John Keats

I

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-eves run;
5 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,
10 Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

II

1 Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
15 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing¹ wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook²
2 S pares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
20 Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
3 Thou watchest the last oozi³ngs hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—
25 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
5 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows,³ borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
30 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;⁴
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden croft;⁵
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

The College Board
Advanced Placement Examination
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total Time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

1. Read the following poem carefully, paying particular attention to the physical intensity of the language. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how the poet conveys not just a literal description of picking blackberries but a deeper understanding of the whole experience. You may wish to include analysis of such elements as diction, imagery, metaphor, rhyme, rhythm, and form.

Blackberry-Picking

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
Line Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
(5) You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam pots
(10) Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato drills¹
We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
(15) Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.²

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.³
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
(20) The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

—Seamus Heaney

"Blackberry-Picking" from *SELECTED POEMS*
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¹ Planted rows

² Bluebeard is a character in a fairy tale who murders his wives.

³ Barn



GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

ALL BREAD

All bread is made of wood,
cow dung, packed brown moss,
the bodies of dead animals, the teeth
and backbones, what is left
after the ravens. This dirt
flows through the stems into the grain,
into the arm; nine strokes
of the axe, skin from a tree,
good water which is the first
gift, four hours.

Live burial under a moist cloth,
a silver dish, the row
of white famine bellies
swollen and taut in the oven,
lungfuls of warm breath stopped
in the heat from an old sun.

Good bread has the salt taste
of your hands after nine
strokes of the axe, the salt
taste of your mouth, it smells
of its own small death, of the deaths
before and after.

Lift these ashes
into your mouth, your blood;
to know what you devour
is to consecrate it,
almost. All bread must be broken
so it can be shared. Together
we eat this earth.

by

Margaret Atwood

TUS MANOS

Cuando tus manos salen,
amor, hacía las mías,
qué me traen volando?
Por qué se detuvieron
en mi boca, de pronto,
por qué las reconozco
como si entonces, antes,
las hubiera tocado,
como si antes de ser
hubieran recorrido
mi frente, mi cintura?

Su suavidad venía
volando sobre el tiempo,
sobre el mar, sobre el humo,
sobre la primavera,
y cuando tú pusiste
tus manos en mi pecho,
reconocí esas alas
de paloma dorada,
reconocí esa greda
y ese color de trigo.

Los años de mi vida
yo caminé buscándolas.
Subí las escaleras,
crucé los arrecifes,
me llevaron los trenes,
las aguas me trajeron,

YOUR HANDS

When your hands go out,
love, toward mine,
what do they bring me flying?
Why did they stop
at my mouth, suddenly,
why do I recognize them
as if then, before,
I had touched them,
as if before they existed
they had passed over
my forehead, my waist?

Their softness came
flying over time,
over the sea, over the smoke,
over the spring,
and when you placed
your hands on my chest,
I recognized those golden
dove wings,
I recognized that clay
and that color of wheat.

All the years of my life
I walked around looking for them.
I went up the stairs,
I crossed the roads,
trains carried me,
waters brought me,

and in the skin of the grapes
I thought I touched you.
The wood suddenly
brought me your touch,
the almond announced to me
your secret softness,
until your hands
closed on my chest
and there like two wings
they ended their journey.

y en la piel de las uvas
me pareció tocarte.
La madera de pronto
me trajo tu contacto,
la almendra me anunciaba
tu suavidad secreta,
hasta que se cerraron
tus manos en mi pecho
y allí como dos alas
terminaron su viaje.

Love's Philosophy

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle –
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdain'd its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea –
What is all this sweet work worth,
If thou kiss not me?

– Percy Bysshe Shelley

ALL BREAD

All bread is made of wood,
cow dung, packed brown moss,
the bodies of dead animals, the teeth
and backbones, what is left
after the ravens. This dirt
flows through the stems into the grain,
into the arm; nine strokes
of the axe, skin from a tree,
good water which is the first
gift, four hours.

Live burial under a moist cloth,
a silver dish, the row
of white famine bellies
swollen and taut in the oven,
lungfuls of warm breath stopped
in the heat from an old sun.

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taste of your mouth, it smells
of its own small death, of the deaths
before and after.

Lift these ashes
into your mouth, your blood;
to know what you devour
is to consecrate it,
almost. All bread must be broken
so it can be shared. Together
we eat this earth.

by

Margaret Atwood

EMILY BRONTË

The Night-Wind

In summer's mellow midnight,
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlor window
And rosetrees wet with dew.

I sat in silent musing,
The soft wind waved my hair: 5
It told me Heaven was glorious,
And sleeping Earth was fair.

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me, 10
But still it whispered lowly,
"How dark the woods will be!

"The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices 15
Instinct⁷ with spirit seem."

I said, "Go, gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind,
But do not think its music 20
Has power to reach my mind.

"Play with the scented flower,
The young tree's supple bough,
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow."

The wanderer would not leave me; 25
Its kiss grew warmer still—
"O come," it sighed so sweetly,
"I'll win thee 'gainst thy will.

"Have we not been from childhood friends?
Have I not loved thee long? 30
As long as thou hast loved the night
Whose silence wakes my song.

"And when thy heart is laid at rest
Beneath the church-yard stone
I shall have time enough to mourn 35
And thou to be alone."

September 11, 1840

1850

7. Infused.

No Coward Soul Is Mine

No coward soul is mine
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere
I see Heaven's glories shine
And Faith shines equal arming me from Fear

O God within my breast
Almighty ever-present Deity
Life, that in me hast rest,
As I Undying Life, have power in Thee

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts, unutterably vain,
Worthless as withered weeds
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thy infinity,
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of Immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears

Though earth and moon were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be
And Thou wert left alone
Every Existence would exist in thee

There is not room for Death
Nor atom that his might could render void
Since thou art Being and Breath
And what thou art may never be destroyed.

Fall, leaves, fall

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.

both poems by Emily Jane Brontë

D. G. C. to J. A.

Come, the wind may never again
Blow as now it blows for us
And the stars may never again, shine as now they shine;
Long before October returns
Seas of blood will have parted us
And you must crush the love in your heart
And I, the love in mine!

For face to face will our kindred stand
And as they are so we shall be
Forgetting how the same sweet earth has borne and nourished all—
One must fight for the people's power
And one for the rights of royalty
And each be ready to give his life to work the other's fall—

The chance of war we cannot shun
Nor would we shrink from our fathers' cause
Nor dread Death more because the hand that gives it may be dear
We must bear to see Ambition rule
Over Love, with his iron laws;
Must yield our blood for a stranger's sake and refuse ourselves a tear!

So, the wind may never again
Blow as now it blows for us
And the stars may never again shine as now they shine
Next October, the cannon's roar
From hostile ranks may be urging us—
Me to strike for your life's blood and you to strike for mine—

The night is darkening round me

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me,
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow;
The storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

both poems by Emily Jane Brontë

SLEEPING IN THE FOREST

I thought the earth
remembered me, she
took me back so tenderly, arranging
her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds. I slept
as never before, a stone
on the riverbed, nothing
between me and the white fire of the stars
but my thoughts, and they floated
light as moths among the branches
of the perfect trees. All night
I heard the small kingdoms breathing
around me, the insects, and the birds
who do their work in the darkness. All night
I rose and fell, as if in water, grappling
with a luminous doom. By morning
I had vanished at least a dozen times
into something better.

MARY OLIVER

From 'Silent is the House'

Come, the wind may never again
Blow as now it blows for us;
And the stars may never again shine as now they shine;
Long before October returns,
Seas of blood will have parted us;
And you must crush the love in your heart, and I the love
in mine!

—Emily Brontë

In-Class Essay
Victorian Age -- "Crossing the Bar" by Alfred,
Lord Tennyson

Directions: Read carefully the following poem by the Victorian poet, Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how formal elements such as symbol, tone, structure and rhyme reveal the speaker's attitude to his experience.

Crossing the Bar

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Tennyson requested that this poem, written three years before his death, be printed at the end of all editions of his poetry.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,¹
When I put out to sea,

5 But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that² which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

10 Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

15 For though from out our bourne³ of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

1. **bar:** Sandbar.
2. **that:** The soul.
3. **bourne:** Boundary.

In-Class Essay
Victorian Poetry -- "To An Athlete Dying Young" by
A. E. Housman

Read the following poem carefully. Considering such elements as speaker, tone, irony, imagery, symbolism and form write a well-organized essay in which you discuss the speaker's response to the death of this athlete.

To an Athlete Dying Young

A. E. Housman

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the marketplace;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

1 [5 Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.

2 [10 Smart lad, to slip betimes away
3 From fields where glory does not stay
And early though the laurel' grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
15 And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
20 And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
4 [And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge cup.

5 [25 And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

A.P. English
Audino

Directions: Read the following poem carefully. Then, taking into consideration the title of the poem, analyze how the poetic devices convey the speaker's attitude toward the sinking of the ship.

The Convergence of the Twain

(Lines on the loss of the Titanic¹)

I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine² fires,
Cold, currents thrid,³ and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls – grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: "What does this vaingloriousness down here?"...

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

¹ On the night of April 14, 1912, the British White Star liner Titanic, the largest ship afloat, collided with an iceberg and sank on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York. Fifteen hundred of the 2,206 passengers lost their lives.

² Bright red. The salamander was supposed to be able to live in the midst of fire.

³ Thread.

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her – so gaily great –
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

-- Thomas Hardy

XLIII. "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways..."

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with a passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, --- I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*
by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

Dover Beach

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.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
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
Heard it on the Aegean, 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.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, 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
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
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

by Matthew Arnold (1851?)

The Secret Land

Every woman of true royalty owns
A secret land more real to her
Than this pale outer world:

At midnight when the house falls quiet
She lays aside needle or book
And visits it unseen.

Shutting her eyes, she improvises
A five-barred gate among tall birches,
Vaults over, takes possession.

Then runs, or flies, or mounts a horse
(A horse will canter up to greet her)
And travels where she will;

Can make grass grow, coax lilies up
From bud to blossom as she watches,
Lets fish eat from her palm.

Has founded villages, planted groves
And hollowed valleys for brooks running
Cool to a land-locked bay.

I never dared question my love
About the government of her queendom
Or its geography,

Nor followed her between those birches,
Setting one leg astride the gate,
Spying into the mist.

Yet she has pledged me, when I die,
A lodge beneath her private palace
In a level clearing of the wood
Where gentians grow and gillyflowers
And sometimes we may meet.

ROBERT GRAVES, British, 1895-1986