

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542)
 “Whoso list to hunt”

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
 But as for me, alas, I may no more.
 The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
 I am of them that farthest cometh behind;
 5 Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
 Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore
 Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore
 Since in a net I seek to hold the wind.
 Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,
 10 As well as I may spend his time in vain,
 And graven with diamonds in letters plain
 There is written her fair neck round about:
 “*Noli me tangere* for Caesar’s I am,
 And wild for to hold though I seem tame.”

Selected Poems, ed. Hardiman Scott (New York: Routledge, 1996), 21. Annotations can be found at [Representative Poetry Online](#). The poem was first published at an unknown date in manuscript rather than print; a transcription of a manuscript source is viewable on [HathiTrust](#). The occasion for the poem, a relationship between Wyatt and Anne Boleyn, later Henry VIII’s wife (“Caesar’s I am”), dates it around 1525.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)
The Sonnets

Please consult the annotations to the assigned sonnets in the digital version of the [Oxford Shakespeare](#) edition. The number of each sonnet here is a link to the corresponding page of notes. The sonnets were first published in 1609; a convenient facsimile is available in the [Internet Shakespeare Editions](#).

Sonnet [1](#)

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease
His tender heir might bear his memory:
5 But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
10 And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 20

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
5 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth;
And for a woman wert thou first created,
10 Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

Sonnet 35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done.
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
5 All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense;
10 Thy adverse party is thy advocate,
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:
Such civil war is in my love and hate
That I an accessory needs must be
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
5 In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
10 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

Sonnet 125

Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honoring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waste or ruining?
5 Have I not seen dwellers on form and favor
Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,
For compound sweet forgoing simple savor,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
10 And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborned informer, a true soul
When most impeached, stands least in thy control.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 138

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutored youth
Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties.

5 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue;
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.

10 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?

O love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told.

Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

John Donne (1572–1631)
Holy Sonnet 4

At the round earth's imagined corners, [blow](#)
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,
5 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance, hath slain, and you whose eyes,
Shall behold God and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,
10 For, if above all these, my sins abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace,
When we are there; here on this lowly ground,
Teach me how to repent; for that's as good
As if thou hadst sealed my pardon, with thy blood.

Holy Sonnet 10

Batter my heart, three-personed God; for, you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
5 I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue,
Yet dearly 'I love you, and would be loved fain,
10 But am betrothed unto your enemy,
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

The Major Works, ed. John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 175, 177–78. Sonnet 4 was probably written in 1609; sonnet 10 is of unknown date. [Digital Donne](#) has a facsimile of the first printing of both poems in *Poems, by J.D.* (London: John Marriot, 1633), [34](#), [38](#).

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)
“Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1803”

Earth has not any thing to shew more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in it's majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
5 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
10 In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Poems, in Two Volumes (London: Longman, 1807), 1.118, [HathiTrust](#). The Cornell Wordsworth edition dates the poem to 1802, despite the printed title.

George Meredith (1828–1909)
Modern Love

I

By this he knew she wept with waking eyes:
That, at his hand's light quiver by her head,
The strange low sobs that shook their common bed
Were called into her with a sharp surprise,
5 And strangled mute, like little gaping snakes,
Dreadfully venomous to him. She lay
Stone-still, and the long darkness flow'd away
With muffled pulses. Then, as midnight makes
Her giant heart of Memory and Tears
10 Drink the pale drug of silence, and so beat
Sleep's heavy measure, they from head to feet
Were moveless, looking thro' their dead black years,
By vain regret scrawl'd over the blank wall.
Like sculptured effigies they might be seen
15 Upon their marriage-tomb, the sword between;
Each wishing for the sword that severs all.

Meredith, "Modern Love" 2

It ended, and the morrow brought the task:
Her eyes were guilty gates that let him in
By shutting all too zealous for their sin:
Each suck'd a secret, and each wore a mask.
5 But, oh the bitter taste her beauty had!
He sicken'd as at breath of poison-flowers:
A languid humour stole among the hours,
And if their smiles encounter'd, he went mad,
And raged, deep inward, till the light was brown
10 Before his vision, and the world forgot,
Look'd wicked as some old dull murder-spot.
A star with lurid beams, she seem'd to crown
The pit of infamy: and then again
He fainted on his vengefulness, and strove
15 To ape the magnanimity of love,
And smote himself, a shuddering heap of pain.

Modern Love and Poems of the English Roadside, with Poems and Ballads (London: Chapman & Hall, 1862), 33-34,
[Google Books](#). The sequence is 50 poems long and does not have a happy ending.

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)
Leda and the Swan

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

5 How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

10 A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

 Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

W.B. Yeats, *The Poems*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 1997), 218. The poem is dated 1923.
Following page: Finneran's note on the poem, in *ibid.*, 664.

220: in a note to the first publication of the poem, Yeats explained that

I wrote *Leda and the Swan* because the editor of a political review asked me for a poem. I thought, 'After the individualist, demagogic movement, founded by Hobbes and popularized by the Encyclopaedists and the French Revolution, we have a soil so exhausted that it cannot grow that crop again for centuries.' Then I thought, 'Nothing is now possible but some movement from above preceded by some violent annunciation.' My fancy began to play with *Leda and the Swan* for metaphor, and I began this poem; but as I wrote, bird and lady took such possession of the scene that all politics went out of it, and my friend tells me that his 'conservative readers would misunderstand the poem.' (1924; VP p. 828)

Yeats refers to George W. Russell (see note to *Crossways*, p. 624), who became editor of the *Irish Statesman* in 1923. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was an English philosopher. The Encyclopaedists were the group of writers who produced the French *Encyclopédie* (1751–72; supplement 1776–77), a major factor in the development of the French Revolution of 1789–99.

In classical mythology, the god Zeus comes to the mortal Leda in the form of a swan. The result of the union varies in different accounts. In the second edition of *A Vision* (London: Macmillan, 1937), p. 51, Yeats adopts the version in which the offspring are Helen, Clytemnestra, and the Dioscuri (Castor and Polydeuces). However, in an unpublished typescript for the 1925 edition of *A Vision* (*A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision* [1925], ed. George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood [London: Macmillan, 1978], notes, p. 65), Clytemnestra is not included in a list of the children, which suggests that Yeats was then following the common variant in which Clytemnestra is a daughter of Leda by her husband, Tyndareus. The abduction of Helen by Paris caused the Trojan War and the destruction of Troy. The Greek forces were commanded by Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, Helen's first husband. On his return from the war, Agamemnon is murdered by Aegisthus, lover of his wife, Clytemnestra.

Wallace Stevens (1879–1955)
Autumn Refrain

The skreak and skritter of evening gone
And grackles gone and sorrows of the sun,
The sorrows of sun, too, gone...the moon and moon,
The yellow moon of words about the nightingale
5 In measureless measures, not a bird for me
But the name of a bird and the name of a nameless air
I have never—shall never hear. And yet beneath
The stillness of everything gone, and being still,
Being and sitting still, something resides,
10 Some skreaking and skrittering residuum,
And grates these evasions of the nightingale
Though I have never—shall never hear that bird.
And the stillness is in the key, all of it is,
The stillness is all in the key of that desolate sound.

The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York: Knopf, 1954), 160, [Literature Online](#). The poem was first published in 1932.

Patrick Kavanagh (1904–1967)
Epic

I have lived in important places, times
When great events were decided, who owned
That half a rood of rock, a no-man's land
Surrounded by our pitchfork-armed claims.
5 I heard the Duffys shouting 'Damn your soul'
And old McCabe stripped to the waist, seen
Step the plot defying blue cast-steel—
'Here is the march along these iron stones'
That was the year of the Munich bother. Which
10 Was more important? I inclined
To lose my faith in Ballyrush and Gortin
Till Homer's ghost came whispering to my mind
He said: I made the Iliad from such
A local row. Gods make their own importance.

Collected Poems (New York: Devin-Adair, 1964), 136.

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917–2000)
the rites for Cousin Vit

Carried her unprotesting out the door.
Kicked back the casket-stand. But it can't hold her,
That stuff and satin aiming to enfold her,
The lid's contrition nor the bolts before.
5 Oh oh. Too much. Too much. Even now, surmise,
She rises in the sunshine. There she goes,
Back to the bars she knew and the repose
In love-rooms and the things in people's eyes.
Too vital and too squeaking. Must emerge.
10 Even now she does the snake-hips with a hiss,
Slops the bad wine across her shantung, talks
Of pregnancy, guitars and bridgework, walks
In parks or alleys, comes haply on the verge
Of happiness, haply hysterics. Is.

Blacks (Chicago: David, 1987), 125. The poem belongs to Brooks's book-length sequence *Annie Allen* (New York: Harper, 1949), in a section called "The Womanhood."

Seamus Heaney (1939–2013)
Clearances
In memoriam M.K.H., 1911–1984

3

When all the others were away at Mass
I was all hers as we peeled potatoes.
They broke the silence, let fall one by one
Like solder weeping off the soldering iron:
5 Cold comforts set between us, things to share
Gleaming in a bucket of clean water.
And again let fall. Little pleasant splashes
From each other's work would bring us to our senses.

10 So while the parish priest at her bedside
Went hammer and tongs at the prayers for the dying
And some were responding and some crying
I remembered her head bent towards my head,
Her breath in mine, our fluent dipping knives—
Never closer the whole rest of our lives.

Heaney, "Clearances" 7

In the last minutes he said more to her
Almost than in all their life together.
'You'll be in New Row on Monday night
And I'll come up for you and you'll be glad
5 When I walk in the door ... Isn't that right?'
His head was bent down to her propped-up head.
She could not hear but we were overjoyed.
He called her good and girl. Then she was dead,
The searching for a pulsebeat was abandoned
10 And we all knew one thing by being there.
The space we stood around had been emptied
Into us to keep, it penetrated
Clearances that suddenly stood open.
High cries were felled and a pure change happened.

Heaney, "Clearances" 8

I thought of walking round and round a space
Utterly empty, utterly a source
Where the decked chestnut tree had lost its place
In our front hedge above the wallflowers.
5 The white chips jumped and jumped and skited high.
I heard the hatchet's differentiated
Accurate cut, the crack, the sigh
And collapse of what luxuriated
Through the shocked tips and wreckage of it all.
10 Deep planted and long gone, my coeval
Chestnut from a jam jar in a hole,
Its heft and hush become a bright nowhere,
A soul ramifying and forever
Silent, beyond silence listened for.

New Selected Poems 1966–1987 (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), 224–25, [Literature Online](#). The sequence, first published in *The Haw Lantern* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), ends with sonnet 8 here. "Clearances" in the title probably has, among other meanings, the sense it has in the phrase "[the Highland Clearances](#)." Heaney glosses the "Chestnut from a jam jar in a hole" at the start of a contemporary essay on Kavanagh, "[The Placeless Heaven: Another Look at Kavanagh](#)," *Massachusetts Review* 28, no. 3 (Autumn, 1987): 371–72.