

Classic Poetry Series

**David Herbert Lawrence**  
**- poems -**

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## David Herbert Lawrence(11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930)

David Herbert Lawrence, novelist, short-story writer, poet and essayist, was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England, in 1885. Though better known as a novelist, Lawrence's first-published works (in 1909) were poems, and his poetry, especially his evocations of the natural world, have since had a significant influence on many poets on both sides of the Atlantic. His early poems reflect the influence of Ezra Pound and Imagist movement, which reached its peak in the early teens of the twentieth century. When Pound attempted to draw Lawrence into his circle of writer-followers, however, Lawrence decided to pursue a more independent path.

He believed in writing poetry that was stark, immediate and true to the mysterious inner force which motivated it. Many of his best-loved poems treat the physical and inner life of plants and animals; others are bitterly satiric and express his outrage at the puritanism and hypocrisy of conventional Anglo-Saxon society. Lawrence was a rebellious and profoundly polemical writer with radical views, who regarded sex, the primitive subconscious, and nature as cures to what he considered the evils of modern industrialized society. Tremendously prolific, his work was often uneven in quality, and he was a continual source of controversy, often involved in widely-publicized censorship cases, most famously for his novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). His collections of poetry include *Look! We Have Come Through* (1917), a collection of poems about his wife; *Birds, Beasts, and Flowers* (1923); and *Pansies* (1929), which was banned on publication in England.

Besides his troubles with the censors, Lawrence was persecuted as well during World War I, for the supposed pro-German sympathies of his wife, Frieda. As a consequence, the Lawrences left England and traveled restlessly to Italy, Germany, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, the French Riviera, Mexico and the United States, unsuccessfully searching for a new homeland. In Taos, New Mexico, he became the center of a group of female admirers who considered themselves his disciples, and whose quarrels for his attention became a literary legend. A lifelong sufferer from tuberculosis, Lawrence died in 1930 in France, at the age of 44.

<b>Views</b>

Critic and admirer Terry Eagleton situates Lawrence on the radical right wing, as

hostile to democracy, liberalism, socialism, and egalitarianism, though never actually embracing fascism. Some of Lawrence's beliefs can be seen in his letters to Bertrand Russell around the year 1915, where he voices his opposition to enfranchising the working class, his hostility to the burgeoning labour movements, and disparages the French Revolution, referring to "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" as the "three-fanged serpent." Rather than a republic, Lawrence called for an absolute Dictator and equivalent Dictatrix to lord over the lower peoples.

Lawrence continued throughout his life to develop his highly personal philosophy. His unpublished introduction to *Sons and Lovers* established the duality central to much of his fiction. This is done with reference to the Holy Trinity. As his philosophy develops, Lawrence moves away from more direct Christian analogies and instead touches upon Mysticism, Buddhism, and Pagan theologies. In some respects, Lawrence was a forerunner of the growing interest in the occult that occurred in the 20th century.

### <b>Poetry</b>

Although best known for his novels, Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 and two of his poems, *Dreams Old* and *Dreams Nascent*, were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. His early works clearly place him in the school of Georgian poets, a group not only named after the reigning monarch but also to the romantic poets of the previous Georgian period whose work they were trying to emulate. What typified the entire movement, and Lawrence's poems of the time, were well-worn poetic tropes and deliberately archaic language. Many of these poems displayed what John Ruskin referred to as the pathetic fallacy, the tendency to ascribe human emotions to animals and even inanimate objects.

Just as the First World War dramatically changed the work of many of the poets who saw service in the trenches, Lawrence's own work saw a dramatic change, during his years in Cornwall. During this time, he wrote free verse influenced by Walt Whitman. He set forth his manifesto for much of his later verse in the introduction to *New Poems*. "We can get rid of the stereotyped movements and the old hackneyed associations of sound or sense. We can break down those artificial conduits and canals through which we do so love to force our utterance. We can break the stiff neck of habit...But we cannot positively prescribe any motion, any rhythm."

Lawrence rewrote many of his novels several times to perfect them and similarly he returned to some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928. This

was in part to fictionalise them, but also to remove some of the artifice of his first works. As he put in himself: "A young man is afraid of his demon and puts his hand over the demon's mouth sometimes and speaks for him." His best known poems are probably those dealing with nature such as those in *Birds Beasts and Flowers and Tortoises*. *Snake*, one of his most frequently anthologised, displays some of his most frequent concerns; those of man's modern distance from nature and subtle hints at religious themes.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob tree

I came down the steps with my pitcher

And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

(Excerpt, "Snake")

Look! We have come through! is his other work from the period of the end of the war and it reveals another important element common to much of his writings; his inclination to lay himself bare in his writings. Although Lawrence could be regarded as a writer of love poems, his usually deal in the less romantic aspects of love such as sexual frustration or the sex act itself. Ezra Pound in his *Literary Essays* complained of Lawrence's interest in his own "disagreeable sensations" but praised him for his "low-life narrative." This is a reference to Lawrence's dialect poems akin to the Scots poems of Robert Burns, in which he reproduced the language and concerns of the people of Nottinghamshire from his youth.

Tha thought tha wanted ter be rid o' me.

'Appen tha did, an' a'.

Tha thought tha wanted ter marry an' se

If ter couldna be master an' th' woman's boss,

Tha'd need a woman different from me,

An' tha knowed it; ay, yet tha comes across

Ter say goodbye! an' a'.

(Excerpt, "The Drained Cup")

Although Lawrence's works after his Georgian period are clearly in the modernist tradition, they were often very different to many other modernist writers, such as Pound. Modernist works were often austere in which every word was carefully worked on and hard-fought for. Lawrence felt all poems had to be personal sentiments and that spontaneity was vital for any work. He called one collection of poems *Pansies*, partly for the simple ephemeral nature of the verse but also as a pun on the French word *panser*, to dress or bandage a wound. "The Noble Englishman" and "Don't Look at Me" were removed from the official edition of *Pansies* on the grounds of obscenity, which he felt wounded by. Even though he lived most of the last ten years of his life abroad, his thoughts were often still on England. Published in 1930, just eleven days after his death, his last work *Nettles* was a series of bitter, nettling but often wry attacks on the moral climate of England.

O the stale old dogs who pretend to guard  
the morals of the masses,  
how smelly they make the great back-yard  
wetting after everyone that passes.

(Excerpt, "The Young and Their Moral Guardians")

Two notebooks of Lawrence's unprinted verse were posthumously published as *Last Poems and More Pansies*. These contain two of Lawrence's most famous poems about death, *Bavarian Gentians* and *The Ship of Death*.

# A Baby Asleep After Pain

As a drenched, drowned bee  
Hangs numb and heavy from a bending flower,  
So clings to me  
My baby, her brown hair brushed with wet tears  
And laid against her cheek;  
Her soft white legs hanging heavily over my arm  
Swinging heavily to my movements as I walk.  
My sleeping baby hangs upon my life,  
Like a burden she hangs on me.  
She has always seemed so light,  
But now she is wet with tears and numb with pain  
Even her floating hair sinks heavily,  
Reaching downwards;  
As the wings of a drenched, drowned bee  
Are a heaviness, and a weariness.

David Herbert Lawrence

# A Baby Running Barefoot

When the bare feet of the baby beat across the grass  
The little white feet nod like white flowers in the wind,  
They poise and run like ripples lapping across the water;  
And the sight of their white play among the grass  
Is like a little robin's song, winsome,  
Or as two white butterflies settle in the cup of one flower  
For a moment, then away with a flutter of wings.

I long for the baby to wander hither to me  
Like a wind-shadow wandering over the water,  
So that she can stand on my knee  
With her little bare feet in my hands,  
Cool like syringa buds,  
Firm and silken like pink young peony flowers.

David Herbert Lawrence

# A Love Song

Reject me not if I should say to you  
I do forget the sounding of your voice,  
I do forget your eyes that searching through  
The mists perceive our marriage, and rejoice.

Yet, when the apple-blossom opens wide  
Under the pallid moonlight's fingering,  
I see your blanched face at my breast, and hide  
My eyes from diligent work, malingering.

Ah, then, upon my bedroom I do draw  
The blind to hide the garden, where the moon  
Enjoys the open blossoms as they straw  
Their beauty for his taking, boon for boon.

And I do lift my aching arms to you,  
And I do lift my anguished, avid breast,  
And I do weep for very pain of you,  
And fling myself at the doors of sleep, for rest.

And I do toss through the troubled night for you,  
Dreaming your yielded mouth is given to mine,  
Feeling your strong breast carry me on into  
The peace where sleep is stronger even than wine.

David Herbert Lawrence



# A Passing Bell

Mournfully to and fro, to and fro the trees are waving;  
What did you say, my dear?  
The rain-bruised leaves are suddenly shaken, as a child  
Asleep still shakes in the clutch of a sob—  
Yes, my love, I hear.

One lonely bell, one only, the storm-tossed afternoon is braving,  
Why not let it ring?  
The roses lean down when they hear it, the tender, mild  
Flowers of the bleeding-heart fall to the throb—  
It is such a little thing!

A wet bird walks on the lawn, call to the boy to come and look,  
Yes, it is over now.  
Call to him out of the silence, call him to see  
The starling shaking its head as it walks in the grass—  
Ah, who knows how?

He cannot see it, I can never show it him, how it shook—  
Don't disturb him, darling.  
—Its head as it walked: I can never call him to me,  
Never, he is not, whatever shall come to pass.  
No, look at the wet starling.

David Herbert Lawrence

# A Sane Revolution

If you make a revolution, make it for fun,  
don't make it in ghastly seriousness,  
don't do it in deadly earnest,  
do it for fun.

Don't do it because you hate people,  
do it just to spit in their eye.

Don't do it for the money,  
do it and be damned to the money.

Don't do it for equality,  
do it because we've got too much equality  
and it would be fun to upset the apple-cart  
and see which way the apples would go a-rolling.

Don't do it for the working classes.  
Do it so that we can all of us be little aristocracies on our own  
and kick our heels like jolly escaped asses.

Don't do it, anyhow, for international Labour.  
Labour is the one thing a man has had too much of.  
Let's abolish labour, let's have done with labouring!  
Work can be fun, and men can enjoy it; then it's not labour.  
Let's have it so! Let's make a revolution for fun!

David Herbert Lawrence

# A Spiritual Woman

Close your eyes, my love, let me make you blind;  
They have taught you to see  
Only a mean arithmetic on the face of things,  
A cunning algebra in the faces of men,  
And God like geometry  
Completing his circles, and working cleverly.

I'll kiss you over the eyes till I kiss you blind;  
If I can—if any one could.  
Then perhaps in the dark you'll have got what you want to find.  
You've discovered so many bits, with your clever eyes,  
And I'm a kaleidoscope  
That you shake and shake, and yet it won't come to your mind.  
Now stop carping at me.—But God, how I hate you!  
Do you fear I shall swindle you?  
Do you think if you take me as I am, that that will abate you  
Somehow?—so sad, so intrinsic, so spiritual, yet so cautious, you  
Must have me all in your will and your consciousness—  
I hate you.

David Herbert Lawrence

# A Winter's Tale

Yesterday the fields were only grey with scattered snow,  
And now the longest grass-leaves hardly emerge;  
Yet her deep footsteps mark the snow, and go  
On towards the pines at the hills' white verge.

I cannot see her, since the mist's white scarf  
Obscures the dark wood and the dull orange sky;  
But she's waiting, I know, impatient and cold, half  
Sobs struggling into her frosty sigh.

Why does she come so promptly, when she must know  
That she's only the nearer to the inevitable farewell;  
The hill is steep, on the snow my steps are slow—  
Why does she come, when she knows what I have to tell?

David Herbert Lawrence

# A Youth Mowing

There are four men mowing down by the Isar;  
I can hear the swish of the scythe-strokes, four  
Sharp breaths taken: yea, and I  
Am sorry for what's in store.

The first man out of the four that's mowing  
Is mine, I claim him once and for all;  
Though it's sorry I am, on his young feet, knowing  
None of the trouble he's led to stall.

As he sees me bringing the dinner, he lifts  
His head as proud as a deer that looks  
Shoulder-deep out of the corn; and wipes  
His scythe-blade bright, unhooks

The scythe-stone and over the stubble to me.  
Lad, thou hast gotten a child in me,  
Laddie, a man thou'lt ha'e to be,  
Yea, though I'm sorry for thee.

David Herbert Lawrence

# After Many Days

I wonder if with you, as it is with me,  
If under your slipping words, that easily flow  
About you as a garment, easily,  
Your violent heart beats to and fro!

Long have I waited, never once confessed,  
Even to myself, how bitter the separation;  
Now, being come again, how make the best  
Reparation?

If I could cast this clothing off from me,  
If I could lift my naked self to you,  
Of if only you would repulse me, a wound would be  
Good; it would let the ache come through.

But that you hold me still so kindly cold  
Aloof my floating heart will not allow;  
Yea, but I loathe you that you should withhold  
Your pleasure now.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Afternoon In School The Last Lesson

When will the bell ring, and end this weariness?  
How long have they tugged the leash, and strained apart  
My pack of unruly hounds: I cannot start  
Them again on a quarry of knowledge they hate to hunt,  
I can haul them and urge them no more.  
No more can I endure to bear the brunt  
Of the books that lie out on the desks: a full three score  
Of several insults of blotted pages and scrawl  
Of slovenly work that they have offered me.  
I am sick, and tired more than any thrall  
Upon the woodstacks working weariedly.

And shall I take  
The last dear fuel and heap it on my soul  
Till I rouse my will like a fire to consume  
Their dross of indifference, and burn the scroll  
Of their insults in punishment? - I will not!  
I will not waste myself to embers for them,  
Not all for them shall the fires of my life be hot,  
For myself a heap of ashes of weariness, till sleep  
Shall have raked the embers clear: I will keep  
Some of my strength for myself, for if I should sell  
It all for them, I should hate them -  
- I will sit and wait for the bell.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Anxiety

The hoar-frost crumbles in the sun,  
The crisping steam of a train  
Melts in the air, while two black birds  
Sweep past the window again.

Along the vacant road, a red  
Bicycle approaches; I wait  
In a thaw of anxiety, for the boy  
To leap down at our gate.

He has passed us by; but is it  
Relief that starts in my breast?  
Or a deeper bruise of knowing that still  
She has no rest.

David Herbert Lawrence



# At The Window

The pine-trees bend to listen to the autumn wind as it mutters  
Something which sets the black poplars ashake with hysterical laughter;  
While slowly the house of day is closing its eastern shutters.

Further down the valley the clustered tombstones recede,  
Winding about their dimness the mist's grey cerements, after  
The street lamps in the darkness have suddenly started to bleed.

The leaves fly over the window and utter a word as they pass  
To the face that leans from the darkness, intent, with two dark-filled eyes  
That watch for ever earnestly from behind the window glass.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Autumn Sunshine

THE SUN sets out the autumn crocuses□  
And fills them up a pouring measure□  
Of death-producing wine, till treasure□  
Runs waste down their chalices.□

All, all Persephone's pale cups of mould□  
Are on the board, are over-filled;□  
The portion to the gods is spilled;□  
Now, mortals all, take hold!□

The time is now, the wine-cup full and full□  
Of lambent heaven, a pledging-cup;□  
Let now all mortal men take up□  
The drink, and a long, strong pull.□

Out of the hell-queen's cup, the heaven's pale wine—□  
Drink then, invisible heroes, drink.□  
Lips to the vessels, never shrink,□  
Throats to the heavens incline.□

And take within the wine the god's great oath□  
By heaven and earth and hellish stream□  
To break this sick and nauseous dream□  
We writhe and lust in, both.

Swear, in the pale wine poured from the cups of the queen□  
Of hell, to wake and be free□  
From this nightmare we writhe in,□  
Break out of this foul has-been.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Baby Tortoise

You know what it is to be born alone,  
Baby tortoise!  
The first day to heave your feet little by little from the shell,  
Not yet awake,  
And remain lapsed on earth,  
Not quite alive.

A tiny, fragile, half-animate bean.

To open your tiny beak-mouth, that looks as if it would never open,

Like some iron door;  
To lift the upper hawk-beak from the lower base  
And reach your skinny little neck  
And take your first bite at some dim bit of herbage,  
Alone, small insect,  
Tiny bright-eye,  
Slow one.

To take your first solitary bite  
And move on your slow, solitary hunt.  
Your bright, dark little eye,  
Your eye of a dark disturbed night,  
Under its slow lid, tiny baby tortoise,  
So indomitable.  
No one ever heard you complain.

You draw your head forward, slowly, from your little wimple

And set forward, slow-dragging, on your four-pinned toes, Rowing slowly  
forward.

Whither away, small bird?  
Rather like a baby working its limbs,  
Except that you make slow, ageless progress  
And a baby makes none.

The touch of sun excites you,  
And the long ages, and the lingering chill  
Make you pause to yawn,

Opening your impervious mouth,  
Suddenly beak-shaped, and very wide, like some suddenly gaping pincers;  
Soft red tongue, and hard thin gums,  
Then close the wedge of your little mountain front,  
Your face, baby tortoise.

Do you wonder at the world, as slowly you turn your head in its wimple  
And look with laconic, black eyes?  
Or is sleep coming over you again,  
The non-life?

You are so hard to wake.

Are you able to wonder?  
Or is it just your indomitable will and pride of the first life  
Looking round  
And slowly pitching itself against the inertia  
Which had seemed invincible?

The vast inanimate,  
And the fine brilliance of your so tiny eye,  
Challenger.

Nay, tiny shell-bird,  
What a huge vast inanimate it is, that you must row against,  
What an incalculable inertia.

Challenger,  
Little Ulysses, fore-runner,  
No bigger than my thumb-nail,  
Buon viaggio.

All animate creation on your shoulder,  
Set forth, little Titan, under your battle-shield.

The ponderous, preponderate,  
Inanimate universe;  
And you are slowly moving, pioneer, you alone.

How vivid your travelling seems now, in the troubled sunshine,  
Stoic, Ulyssean atom;  
Suddenly hasty, reckless, on high toes.

Voiceless little bird,  
Resting your head half out of your wimple  
In the slow dignity of your eternal pause.  
Alone, with no sense of being alone,  
And hence six times more solitary;  
Fulfilled of the slow passion of pitching through immemorial ages  
Your little round house in the midst of chaos.

Over the garden earth,  
Small bird,  
Over the edge of all things.

Traveller,  
With your tail tucked a little on one side  
Like a gentleman in a long-skirted coat.

All life carried on your shoulder,  
Invincible fore-runner.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Ballad Of Another Ophelia

Oh the green glimmer of apples in the orchard,  
Lamps in a wash of rain!  
Oh the wet walk of my brown hen through the stackyard,  
Oh tears on the window pane!

Nothing now will ripen the bright green apples,  
Full of disappointment and of rain,  
Brackish they will taste, of tears, when the yellow dapples  
Of autumn tell the withered tale again.

All round the yard it is cluck, my brown hen,  
Cluck, and the rain-wet wings,  
Cluck, my marigold bird, and again  
Cluck for your yellow darlings.

For the grey rat found the gold thirteen  
Huddled away in the dark,  
Flutter for a moment, oh the beast is quick and keen,  
Extinct one yellow-fluffy spark.

Once I had a lover bright like running water,  
Once his face was laughing like the sky;  
Open like the sky looking down in all its laughter  
On the buttercups, and the buttercups was I.

What, then, is there hidden in the skirts of all the blossom?  
What is peeping from your wings, oh mother hen?  
'Tis the sun who asks the question, in a lovely haste for wisdom;  
What a lovely haste for wisdom is in men!

Yea, but it is cruel when undressed is all the blossom,  
And her shift is lying white upon the floor,  
That a grey one, like a shadow, like a rat, a thief, a rain-storm,  
Creeps upon her then and gathers in his store.

Oh the grey garner that is full of half-grown apples,  
Oh the golden sparkles laid extinct!  
And oh, behind the cloud-sheaves, like yellow autumn dapples,  
Did you see the wicked sun that winked!

David Herbert Lawrence

# Bat

At evening, sitting on this terrace,  
When the sun from the west, beyond Pisa, beyond the mountains of Carrara  
Departs, and the world is taken by surprise ...

When the tired flower of Florence is in gloom beneath the glowing  
Brown hills surrounding ...

When under the arches of the Ponte Vecchio  
A green light enters against stream, flush from the west,  
Against the current of obscure Arno ...

Look up, and you see things flying  
Between the day and the night;  
Swallows with spools of dark thread sewing the shadows together.

A circle swoop, and a quick parabola under the bridge arches  
Where light pushes through;  
A sudden turning upon itself of a thing in the air.  
A dip to the water.

And you think:  
'The swallows are flying so late!'

Swallows?

Dark air-life looping  
Yet missing the pure loop ...  
A twitch, a twitter, an elastic shudder in flight  
And serrated wings against the sky,  
Like a glove, a black glove thrown up at the light,  
And falling back.

Never swallows!  
Bats!  
The swallows are gone.

At a wavering instant the swallows gave way to bats  
By the Ponte Vecchio ...  
Changing guard.



Bats, and an uneasy creeping in one's scalp  
As the bats swoop overhead!  
Flying madly.

Pipistrello!  
Black piper on an infinitesimal pipe.  
Little lumps that fly in air and have voices indefinite, wildly vindictive;

Wings like bits of umbrella.

Bats!

Creatures that hang themselves up like an old rag, to sleep;  
And disgustingly upside down.

Hanging upside down like rows of disgusting old rags  
And grinning in their sleep.  
Bats!

Not for me!

David Herbert Lawrence

# Bavarian Gentians

Not every man has gentians in his house  
in Soft September, at slow, Sad Michaelmas.  
Bavarian gentians, big and dark, only dark  
darkening the daytime torchlike with the smoking blueness of Pluto's  
gloom,  
ribbed and torchlike, with their blaze of darkness spread blue  
down flattening into points, flattened under the sweep of white day  
torch-flower of the blue-smoking darkness, Pluto's dark-blue daze,  
black lamps from the halls of Dis, burning dark blue,  
giving off darkness, blue darkness, as Demeter's pale lamps give off  
light,  
lead me then, lead me the way.  
Reach me a gentian, give me a torch!  
Let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of a flower  
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness  
down the way Persephone goes, just now, in first-frosted September  
to the sightless realm where darkness is married to dark  
and Persephone herself is but a voice, as a bride  
a gloom invisible enfolded in the deeper dark  
of the arms of Pluto as he ravishes her once again  
and pierces her once more with his passion of the utter dark  
among the splendour of black-blue torches, shedding  
fathomless darkness on the nuptials.

Bavarian gentians, tall and dark, but dark  
darkening the daytime torch-like with the smoking blueness of Pluto's gloom,  
ribbed hellish flowers erect, with their blaze of darkness spread blue,  
blown flat into points, by the heavy white draught of the day.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Beautiful Old Age

It ought to be lovely to be old  
to be full of the peace that comes of experience  
and wrinkled ripe fulfilment.

The wrinkled smile of completeness that follows a life  
lived undaunted and unsoured with accepted lies  
they would ripen like apples, and be scented like pippins  
in their old age.

Soothing, old people should be, like apples  
when one is tired of love.  
Fragrant like yellowing leaves, and dim with the soft  
stillness and satisfaction of autumn.

And a girl should say:  
It must be wonderful to live and grow old.  
Look at my mother, how rich and still she is! -

And a young man should think: By Jove  
my father has faced all weathers, but it's been a life!

David Herbert Lawrence

# Bei Hennef

The little river twittering in the twilight,  
The wan, wandering look of the pale sky.  
    This is almost bliss.

And everything shut up and gone to sleep,  
All the troubles and anxieties and pain  
    Gone under the twilight.

Only the twilight now, and the soft 'Sh! ' of the river  
    That will last for ever.

And at last I know my love for you is here;  
I can see it all, it is whole like the twilight,  
It is large, so large, I could not see it before,  
Because of the little lights and flickers and interruptions,  
    Troubles, anxieties and pains.

You are the call and I am the answer.  
You are the wish, and I the fulfilment.  
You are the night, and I the day.  
    What else? It is perfect enough.  
    It is perfectly complete,  
    You and I,  
    What more--?

Strange how we suffer in spite of this.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Belief

Forever nameless  
Forever unknown  
Forever unconceived  
Forever unrepresented  
yet forever felt in the soul.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Birdcage Walk

When the wind blows her veil  
And uncovers her laughter  
I cease, I turn pale.  
When the wind blows her veil  
From the woes I bewail  
Of love and hereafter:  
When the wind blows her veil  
I cease, I turn pale.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Blue

The earth again like a ship steams out of the dark sea over  
The edge of the blue, and the sun stands up to see us glide  
Slowly into another day; slowly the rover  
Vessel of darkness takes the rising tide.

I, on the deck, am startled by this dawn confronting  
Me who am issued amazed from the darkness, stripped  
And quailing here in the sunshine, delivered from haunting  
The night unsounded whereon our days are shipped.

Feeling myself undawning, the day's light playing upon me,  
I who am substance of shadow, I all compact  
Of the stuff of the night, finding myself all wrongly  
Among the crowds of things in the sunshine jostled and racked.

I with the night on my lips, I sigh with the silence of death;  
And what do I care though the very stones should cry me unreal, though the  
clouds  
Shine in conceit of substance upon me, who am less than the rain.  
Do I know the darkness within them? What are they but shrouds?

The clouds go down the sky with a wealthy ease  
Casting a shadow of scorn upon me for my share in death; but I  
Hold my own in the midst of them, darkling, defy  
The whole of the day to extinguish the shadow I lift on the breeze.

Yea, though the very clouds have vantage over me,  
Enjoying their glancing flight, though my love is dead,  
I still am not homeless here, I've a tent by day  
Of darkness where she sleeps on her perfect bed.

And I know the host, the minute sparkling of darkness  
Which vibrates untouched and virile through the grandeur of night,  
But which, when dawn crows challenge, assaulting the vivid notes  
Of living darkness, bursts fretfully, and is bright:

Runs like a fretted arc-lamp into light,  
Stirred by conflict to shining, which else  
Were dark and whole with the night.

Runs to a fret of speed like a racing wheel,  
Which else were aslumber along with the whole  
Of the dark, swinging rhythmic instead of a-reel.

Is chafed to anger, bursts into rage like thunder;  
Which else were a silent grasp that held the heavens  
Arrested, beating thick with wonder.

Leaps like a fountain of blue sparks leaping  
In a jet from out of obscurity,  
Which erst was darkness sleeping.

Runs into streams of bright blue drops,  
Water and stones and stars, and myriads  
Of twin-blue eyes, and crops

Of floury grain, and all the hosts of day,  
All lovely hosts of ripples caused by fretting  
The Darkness into play.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Brooding Grief

A yellow leaf from the darkness  
Hops like a frog before me.  
Why should I start and stand still?

I was watching the woman that bore me  
Stretched in the brindled darkness  
Of the sick-room, rigid with will  
To die: and the quick leaf tore me  
Back to this rainy swill  
Of leaves and lamps and traffic mingled before me.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Brother And Sister

The shorn moon trembling indistinct on her path,  
Frail as a scar upon the pale blue sky,  
Draws towards the downward slope: some sorrow hath  
Worn her down to the quick, so she faintly fares  
Along her foot-searched way without knowing why  
She creeps persistent down the sky's long stairs.

Some day they see, though I have never seen,  
The dead moon heaped within the new moon's arms;  
For surely the fragile, fine young thing had been  
Too heavily burdened to mount the heavens so.  
But my heart stands still, as a new, strong dread alarms  
Me; might a young girl be heaped with such shadow of woe?

Since Death from the mother moon has pared us down to the quick,  
And cast us forth like shorn, thin moons, to travel  
An uncharted way among the myriad thick  
Strewn stars of silent people, and luminous litter  
Of lives which sorrows like mischievous dark mice chavel  
To nought, diminishing each star's glitter,

Since Death has delivered us utterly, naked and white,  
Since the month of childhood is over, and we stand alone,  
Since the beloved, faded moon that set us alight  
Is delivered from us and pays no heed though we moan  
In sorrow, since we stand in bewilderment, strange  
And fearful to sally forth down the sky's long range.

We may not cry to her still to sustain us here,  
We may not hold her shadow back from the dark.  
Oh, let us here forget, let us take the sheer  
Unknown that lies before us, bearing the ark  
Of the covenant onwards where she cannot go.  
Let us rise and leave her now, she will never know.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Butterfly

Butterfly, the wind blows sea-ward,  
strong beyond the garden-wall!  
Butterfly, why do you settle on my  
shoe, and sip the dirt on my shoe,  
Lifting your veined wings, lifting them?  
big white butterfly!

Already it is October, and the wind  
blows strong to the sea  
from the hills where snow must have  
fallen, the wind is polished with  
snow.

Here in the garden, with red  
geraniums, it is warm, it is warm  
but the wind blows strong to sea-ward,  
white butterfly, content on my shoe!

Will you go, will you go from my warm  
house?  
Will you climb on your big soft wings,  
black-dotted,  
as up an invisible rainbow, an arch  
till the wind slides you sheer from the  
arch-crest  
and in a strange level fluttering you go  
out to sea-ward, white speck!

Anonymous submission.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Conceit

It is conceit that kills us  
and makes us cowards instead of gods.

Under the great Command: Know thy self, and that thou art mortal!  
we have become fatally self-conscious, fatally self-important, fatally entangled in  
the Laocoön coils of our conceit.

Now we have to admit we can't know ourselves, we can only know about  
ourselves.

And I am not interested to know about myself any more,  
I only entangle myself in the knowing.

Now let me be myself,  
now let me be myself, and flicker forth,  
now let me be myself, in the being, one of the gods.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Conundrums

Tell me a word  
that you've often heard,  
yet it makes you squint  
when you see it in print!

Tell me a thing  
that you've often seen  
yet if put in a book  
it makes you turn green!

Tell me a thing  
that you often do,  
when described in a story  
shocks you through and through!

Tell me what's wrong  
with words or with you  
that you don't mind the thing  
yet the name is taboo.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Craving For Spring

I wish it were spring in the world.

Let it be spring!

Come, bubbling, surging tide of sap!

Come, rush of creation!

Come, life! surge through this mass of mortification!

Come, sweep away these exquisite, ghastly first-flowers,  
which are rather last-flowers!

Come, thaw down their cool portentousness, dissolve them:

snowdrops, straight, death-veined exhalations of white and purple crocuses,  
flowers of the penumbra, issue of corruption, nourished in mortification,  
jets of exquisite finality;

Come, spring, make havoc of them!

I trample on the snowdrops, it gives me pleasure to tread down the jonquils,  
to destroy the chill Lent lilies;

for I am sick of them, their faint-bloodedness,  
slow-blooded, icy-fleshed, portentous.

I want the fine, kindling wine-sap of spring,

gold, and of inconceivably fine, quintessential brightness,  
rare almost as beams, yet overwhelmingly potent,  
strong like the greatest force of world-balancing.

This is the same that picks up the harvest of wheat

and rocks it, tons of grain, on the ripening wind;

the same that dangles the globe-shaped pleiads of fruit

temptingly in mid-air, between a playful thumb and finger;

oh, and suddenly, from out of nowhere, whirls the pear-bloom,

upon us, and apple- and almond- and apricot- and quince-blossom,

storms and cumulus clouds of all imaginable blossom

about our bewildered faces,

though we do not worship.

I wish it were spring

cunningly blowing on the fallen sparks, odds and ends of the old, scattered fire,  
and kindling shapely little conflagrations

curious long-legged foals, and wide-eared calves, and naked sparrow-bubs.

I wish that spring  
would start the thundering traffic of feet  
new feet on the earth, beating with impatience.

I wish it were spring, thundering  
delicate, tender spring.

I wish these brittle, frost-lovely flowers of passionate, mysterious corruption  
were not yet to come still more from the still-flickering discontent.

Oh, in the spring, the bluebell bows him down for very exuberance,  
exulting with secret warm excess,  
bowed down with his inner magnificence!

Oh, yes, the gush of spring is strong enough  
to toss the globe of earth like a ball on a water-jet  
dancing sportfully;  
as you see a tiny celluloid ball tossing on a squirt of water  
for men to shoot at, penny-a-time, in a booth at a fair.

The gush of spring is strong enough  
to play with the globe of earth like a ball on a fountain;  
At the same time it opens the tiny hands of the hazel  
with such infinite patience.

The power of the rising, golden, all-creative sap could take the earth  
and heave it off among the stars, into the invisible;  
the same sets the throstle at sunset on a bough  
singing against the blackbird;  
comes out in the hesitating tremor of the primrose,  
and betrays its candour in the round white strawberry flower,  
is dignified in the foxglove, like a Red-Indian brave.

Ah come, come quickly, spring!  
come and lift us towards our culmination, we myriads;  
we who have never flowered, like patient cactuses.  
Come and lift us to our end, to blossom, bring us to our summer  
we who are winter-weary in the winter of the of the world.  
Come making the chaffinch nests hollow and cosy,  
come and soften the willow buds till they are puffed and furred,  
then blow them over with gold.  
Come and cajole the gawky colt's-foot flowers.

Come quickly, and vindicate us.

against too much death.

Come quickly, and stir the rotten globe of the world from within,  
burst it with germination, with world anew.

Come now, to us, your adherents, who cannot flower from the ice.  
All the world gleams with the lilies of death the Unconquerable,  
but come, give us our turn.

Enough of the virgins and lilies, of passionate, suffocating perfume of corruption,  
no more narcissus perfume, lily harlots, the blades of sensation  
piercing the flesh to blossom of death.

Have done, have done with this shuddering, delicious business  
of thrilling ruin in the flesh, of pungent passion, of rare, death-edged ecstasy.  
Give us our turn, give us a chance, let our hour strike,  
O soon, soon!

Let the darkness turn violet with rich dawn.

Let the darkness be warmed, warmed through to a ruddy violet,  
incipient purpling towards summer in the world of the heart of man.

Are the violets already here!

Show me! I tremble so much to hear it, that even now  
on the threshold of spring, I fear I shall die.

Show me the violets that are out.

Oh, if it be true, and the living darkness of the blood of man is purpling with  
violets,

if the violets are coming out from under the rack of men, winter-rotten and  
fallen,

we shall have spring.

Pray not to die on this Pisgah blossoming with violets.

Pray to live through.

If you catch a whiff of violets from the darkness of the shadow of man

it will be spring in the world,

it will be spring in the world of the living;

wonderment organising itself, heralding itself with the violets,  
stirring of new seasons.

Ah, do not let me die on the brink of such anticipation!

Worse, let me not deceive myself.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Cruelty And Love

What large, dark hands are those at the window  
Lifted, grasping in the yellow light  
Which makes its way through the curtain web  
At my heart to-night?

Ah, only the leaves! So leave me at rest,  
In the west I see a redness come  
Over the evening's burning breast --  
For now the pain is numb.

The woodbine creeps abroad  
Calling low to her lover:  
The sunlit flirt who all the day  
Has poised above her lips in play  
And stolen kisses, shallow and gay  
Of dalliance, now has gone away  
-- She woos the moth with her sweet, low word,  
And when above her his broad wings hover  
Then her bright breast she will uncover  
And yeild her honey-drop to her lover.

Into the yellow, evening glow  
Saunters a man from the farm below,  
Leans, and looks in at the low-built shed  
Where hangs the swallow's marriage bed.  
The bird lies warm against the wall.  
She glances quick her startled eyes  
Towards him, then she turns away  
Her small head, making warm display  
Of red upon the throat. Her terrors sway  
Her out of the nest's warm, busy ball,  
Whose plaintive cries start up as she flies  
In one blue stoop from out the sties  
Into the evening's empty hall.

Oh, water-hen, beside the rushes  
Hide your quaint, unfading blushes,  
Still your quick tail, and lie as dead,  
Till the distance covers his dangerous tread.

The rabbit presses back her ears,  
Turns back her liquid, anguished eyes  
And crouches low: then with wild spring  
Spurts from the terror of the oncoming  
To be choked back, the wire ring  
Her frantic effort throttling:  
Piteous brown ball of quivering fears!

Ah soon in his large, hard hands she dies,  
And swings all loose to the swing of his walk.  
Yet calm and kindly are his eyes  
And ready to open in brown surprise  
Should I not answer to his talk  
Or should he my tears surmise.

I hear his hand on the latch, and rise from my chair  
Watching the door open: he flashes bare  
His strong teeth in a smile, and flashes his eyes  
In a smile like triumph upon me; then careless-wise  
He flings the rabbit soft on the table board  
And comes towards me: ah, the uplifted sword  
Of his hand against my bosom, and oh, the broad  
Blade of his hand that raises my face to applaud  
His coming: he raises up my face to him  
And caresses my mouth with his fingers, smelling grim  
Of the rabbit's fur! God, I am caught in a snare!  
I know not what fine wire is round my throat,  
I only know I let him finger there  
My pulse of life, letting him nose like a stoat  
Who sniffs with joy before he drinks the blood:  
And down his mouth comes to my mouth, and down  
His dark bright eyes descend like a fiery hood  
Upon my mind: his mouth meets mine, and a flood  
Of sweet fire sweeps across me, so I drown  
Within him, die, and find death good.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Discipline

It is stormy, and raindrops cling like silver bees to the pane,  
The thin sycamores in the playground are swinging with flattened leaves;  
The heads of the boys move dimly through a yellow gloom that stains  
The class; over them all the dark net of my discipline weaves.

It is no good, dear, gentleness and forbearance, I endured too long:  
I have pushed my hands in the dark soil, under the flower of my soul  
And the gentle leaves, and have felt where the roots are strong  
Fixed in the darkness, grappling for the deep soil's little control.

And there is the dark, my darling, where the roots are entangled and fight  
Each one for its hold on the oblivious darkness, I know that there  
In the night where we first have being, before we rise on the light,  
We are not brothers, my darling, we fight and we do not spare.

And in the original dark the roots cannot keep, cannot know  
Any communion whatever, but they bind themselves on to the dark,  
And drawing the darkness together, crush from it a twilight, a slow  
Burning that breaks at last into leaves and a flower's bright spark.

I came to the boys with love, my dear, but they turned on me;  
I came with gentleness, with my heart 'twixt my hands like a bowl,  
Like a loving-cup, like a grail, but they spilt it triumphantly  
And tried to break the vessel, and to violate my soul.

But what have I to do with the boys, deep down in my soul, my love?  
I throw from out of the darkness my self like a flower into sight,  
Like a flower from out of the night-time, I lift my face, and those  
Who will may warm their hands at me, comfort this night.

But whosoever would pluck apart my flowering shall burn their hands,  
So flowers are tender folk, and roots can only hide,  
Yet my flowerings of love are a fire, and the scarlet brands  
Of my love are roses to look at, but flames to chide.

But comfort me, my love, now the fires are low,  
Now I am broken to earth like a winter destroyed, and all  
Myself but a knowledge of roots, of roots in the dark that throw  
A net on the undersoil, which lies passive beneath their thrall.

But comfort me, for henceforth my love is yours alone,  
To you alone will I offer the bowl, to you will I give  
My essence only, but love me, and I will atone  
To you for my general loving, atone as long as I live.

David Herbert Lawrence

## Discord In Childhood

Outside the house an ash-tree hung its terrible whips,  
And at night when the wind arose, the lash of the tree  
Shrieked and slashed the wind, as a ship's  
Weird rigging in a storm shrieks hideously.

Within the house two voices arose in anger, a slender lash  
Whistling delirious rage, and the dreadful sound  
Of a thick lash booming and bruising, until it drowned  
The other voice in a silence of blood, 'neath the noise of the ash.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Dissolute

Many years have I still to burn, detained  
Like a candle flame on this body; but I enshrine  
A darkness within me, a presence which sleeps contained  
In my flame of living, her soul enfolded in mine.

And through these years, while I burn on the fuel of life,  
What matter the stuff I lick up in my living flame,  
Seeing I keep in the fire-core, inviolate,  
A night where she dreams my dreams for me, ever the same.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Dolor Of Autumn

The acrid scents of autumn,  
Reminiscent of slinking beasts, make me fear  
Everything, tear-trembling stars of autumn  
And the snore of the night in my ear.

For suddenly, flush-fallen,  
All my life, in a rush  
Of shedding away, has left me  
Naked, exposed on the bush.

I, on the bush of the globe,  
Like a newly-naked berry, shrink  
Disclosed: but I also am prowling  
As well in the scents that slink

Abroad: I in this naked berry  
Of flesh that stands dismayed on the bush;  
And I in the stealthy, brindled odours  
Prowling about the lush

And acrid night of autumn;  
My soul, along with the rout,  
Rank and treacherous, prowling,  
Disseminated out.

For the night, with a great breath intaken,  
Has taken my spirit outside  
Me, till I reel with disseminated consciousness,  
Like a man who has died.

At the same time I stand exposed  
Here on the bush of the globe,  
A newly-naked berry of flesh  
For the stars to probe.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Dreams

All people dream, but not equally.

Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their mind,  
Wake in the morning to find that it was vanity.

But the dreamers of the day are dangerous people,  
For they dream their dreams with open eyes,  
And make them come true.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Dreams Nascent

My world is a painted fresco, where coloured shapes  
Of old, ineffectual lives linger blurred and warm;  
An endless tapestry the past has women drapes  
The halls of my life, compelling my soul to conform.

The surface of dreams is broken,  
The picture of the past is shaken and scattered.  
Fluent, active figures of men pass along the railway, and I am woken  
From the dreams that the distance flattered.

Along the railway, active figures of men.  
They have a secret that stirs in their limbs as they move  
Out of the distance, nearer, commanding my dreamy world.

Here in the subtle, rounded flesh  
Beats the active ecstasy.  
In the sudden lifting my eyes, it is clearer,  
The fascination of the quick, restless Creator moving through the mesh  
Of men, vibrating in ecstasy through the rounded flesh.

Oh my boys, bending over your books,  
In you is trembling and fusing  
The creation of a new-patterned dream, dream of a generation:  
And I watch to see the Creator, the power that patterns the dream.

The old dreams are beautiful, beloved, soft-toned, and sure,  
But the dream-stuff is molten and moving mysteriously,  
Alluring my eyes; for I, am I not also dream-stuff,  
Am I not quickening, diffusing myself in the pattern, shaping and shapen?

Here in my class is the answer for the great yearning:  
Eyes where I can watch the swim of old dreams reflected on the molten metal of  
dreams,  
Watch the stir which is rhythmic and moves them all as a heart-beat moves the  
blood,  
Here in the swelling flesh the great activity working,  
Visible there in the change of eyes and the mobile features.

Oh the great mystery and fascination of the unseen Shaper,

The power of the melting, fusing Force—heat, light, all in one,  
Everything great and mysterious in one, swelling and shaping the dream in the  
flesh,  
As it swells and shapes a bud into blossom.

Oh the terrible ecstasy of the consciousness that I am life!  
Oh the miracle of the whole, the widespread, labouring concentration  
Swelling mankind like one bud to bring forth the fruit of a dream,  
Oh the terror of lifting the innermost I out of the sweep of the impulse of life,  
And watching the great Thing labouring through the whole round flesh of the  
world;  
And striving to catch a glimpse of the shape of the coming dream,  
As it quickens within the labouring, white-hot metal,  
Catch the scent and the colour of the coming dream,  
Then to fall back exhausted into the unconscious, molten life!

David Herbert Lawrence

# Dreams Old

I have opened the window to warm my hands on the sill  
Where the sunlight soaks in the stone: the afternoon  
Is full of dreams, my love, the boys are all still  
In a wistful dream of Lorna Doone.

The clink of the shunting engines is sharp and fine,  
Like savage music striking far off, and there  
On the great, uplifted blue palace, lights stir and shine  
Where the glass is domed in the blue, soft air.

There lies the world, my darling, full of wonder and wistfulness and strange  
Recognition and greetings of half-acquaint things, as I greet the cloud  
Of blue palace aloft there, among misty indefinite dreams that range  
At the back of my life's horizon, where the dreamings of past lives crowd.

Over the nearness of Norwood Hill, through the mellow veil  
Of the afternoon glows to me the old romance of David and Dora,  
With the old, sweet, soothing tears, and laughter that shakes the sail  
Of the ship of the soul over seas where dreamed dreams lure the unoceaned  
explorer.

All the bygone, hushèd years  
Streaming back where the mist distils  
Into forgetfulness: soft-sailing waters where fears  
No longer shake, where the silk sail fills  
With an unfelt breeze that ebbs over the seas, where the storm  
Of living has passed, on and on  
Through the coloured iridescence that swims in the warm  
Wake of the tumult now spent and gone,  
Drifts my boat, wistfully lapsing after  
The mists of vanishing tears and the echo of laughter.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Drunk

Too far away, oh love, I know,  
To save me from this haunted road,  
Whose lofty roses break and blow  
On a night-sky bent with a load

Of lights: each solitary rose,  
Each arc-lamp golden does expose  
Ghost beyond ghost of a blossom, shows  
Night blenched with a thousand snows.

Of hawthorn and of lilac trees,  
White lilac; shows discoloured night  
Dripping with all the golden lees  
Laburnum gives back to light.

And shows the red of hawthorn set  
On high to the purple heaven of night,  
Like flags in blenched blood newly wet,  
Blood shed in the noiseless fight.

Of life for love and love for life,  
Of hunger for a little food,  
Of kissing, lost for want of a wife  
Long ago, long ago wooed.

. . . . .

Too far away you are, my love,  
To steady my brain in this phantom show  
That passes the nightly road above  
And returns again below.

The enormous cliff of horse-chestnut trees  
Has poised on each of its ledges  
An erect small girl looking down at me;  
White-night-gowned little chits I see,  
And they peep at me over the edges  
Of the leaves as though they would leap, should I call  
Them down to my arms;

“But, child, you’re too small for me, too small  
Your little charms.”

White little sheaves of night-gowned maids,  
Some other will thresh you out!  
And I see leaning from the shades  
A lilac like a lady there, who braids  
Her white mantilla about  
Her face, and forward leans to catch the sight  
Of a man’s face,  
Gracefully sighing through the white  
Flowery mantilla of lace.

And another lilac in purple veiled  
Discreetly, all recklessly calls  
In a low, shocking perfume, to know who has hailed  
Her forth from the night: my strength has failed  
In her voice, my weak heart falls:  
Oh, and see the laburnum shimmering  
Her draperies down,  
As if she would slip the gold, and glimmering  
White, stand naked of gown.

. . . . .

The pageant of flowery trees above  
The street pale-passionate goes,  
And back again down the pavement, Love  
In a lesser pageant flows.

Two and two are the folk that walk,  
They pass in a half embrace  
Of linkèd bodies, and they talk  
With dark face leaning to face.

Come then, my love, come as you will  
Along this haunted road,  
Be whom you will, my darling, I shall  
Keep with you the troth I trowed.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Eagle in New Mexico

Towards the sun, towards the south-west  
A scorched breast.  
A scorched breast, breasting the sun like an answer,  
Like a retort.  
An eagle at the top of a low cedar-bush  
On the sage-ash desert  
Reflecting the scorch of the sun from his breast ;  
Eagle, with the sickle dripping darkly above.

Erect, scorched-pallid out of the hair of the cedar,  
Erect, with the god-thrust entering him from below,  
Eagle gloved in feathers  
In scorched white feathers  
In burnt dark feathers  
In feathers still fire-rusted ;  
Sickle-overswept, sickle dripping over and above.

Sun-breaster,  
Staring two ways at once, to right and left ;  
Masked-one  
Dark-visaged  
Sickle-masked  
With iron between your two eyes ;  
You feather-gloved  
To the feet ;  
Foot-fierce ;  
Erect one ;  
The god-thrust entering you steadily from below.

You never look at the sun with your two eyes.  
Only the inner eye of your scorched broad breast  
Looks straight at the sun.

You are dark  
Except scorch-pale-breasted ;  
And dark cleaves down and weapon-hard downward curving  
At your scorched breast,  
Like a sword of Damocles,  
Beaked eagle.

You've dipped it in blood so many times  
That dark face-weapon, to temper it well,  
Blood-thirsty bird.  
Why do you front the sun so obstinately,  
American eagle ?  
As if you owed him an old, old grudge, great sun : or an old, old allegiance.

When you pick the red smoky heart from a rabbit or a light-blooded bird  
Do you lift it to the sun, as the Aztec priests used to lift red hearts of men ?

Does the sun need steam of blood do you think  
In America, still,  
Old eagle ?

Does the sun in New Mexico sail like a fiery bird of prey in the sky  
Hovering ?

Does he shriek for blood ?  
Does he fan great wings above the prairie, like a hovering, blood-thirsty bird ?

And are you his priest, big eagle  
Whom the Indians aspire to ?  
Is there a bond of bloodshed between you ?

Is your continent cold from the ice-age still, that the sun is so angry ?  
Is the blood of your continent somewhat reptilian still,  
That the sun should be greedy for it ?

I don't yield to you, big, jowl-faced eagle  
Nor you nor your blood-thirsty sun  
That sucks up blood  
Leaving a nervous people.

Fly off, big bird with a big black back.  
Fly slowly away, with a rust of fire in your tail,  
Dark as you are on your dark side, eagle of heaven.

Even the sun in heaven can be curbed and chastened at last  
By the life in the hearts of men.  
And you, great bird, sun-starrer, heavy black beak  
Can be put out of office as sacrifice bringer.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Elegy

Since I lost you, my darling, the sky has come near,  
And I am of it, the small sharp stars are quite near,  
The white moon going among them like a white bird among snow-berries,  
And the sound of her gently rustling in heaven like a bird I hear.

And I am willing to come to you now, my dear,  
As a pigeon lets itself off from a cathedral dome  
To be lost in the haze of the sky, I would like to come,  
And be lost out of sight with you, and be gone like foam.

For I am tired, my dear, and if I could lift my feet,  
My tenacious feet from off the dome of the earth  
To fall like a breath within the breathing wind  
Where you are lost, what rest, my love, what rest!

David Herbert Lawrence

# Epilogue

Patience, little Heart.  
One day a heavy, June-hot woman  
Will enter and shut the door to stay.

And when your stifling heart would summon  
Cool, lonely night, her roused breasts will keep the night at bay,  
Sitting in your room like two tiger-lilies  
Flaming on after sunset,  
Destroying the cool, lonely night with the glow of their hot twilight;  
There in the morning, still, while the fierce strange scent comes yet  
Stronger, hot and red; till you thirst for the daffodillies  
With an anguished, husky thirst that you cannot assuage,  
When the daffodillies are dead, and a woman of the dog-days holds you in gage.  
Patience, little Heart.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Excursion

I wonder, can the night go by;  
Can this shot arrow of travel fly  
Shaft-golden with light, sheer into the sky  
Of a dawned to-morrow,  
Without ever sleep delivering us  
From each other, or losing the dolorous  
Unfruitful sorrow!

What is it then that you can see  
That at the window endlessly  
You watch the red sparks whirl and flee  
And the night look through?  
Your presence peering lonelily there  
Oppresses me so, I can hardly bear  
To share the train with you.

You hurt my heart-beats' privacy;  
I wish I could put you away from me;  
I suffocate in this intimacy,  
For all that I love you;  
How I have longed for this night in the train,  
Yet now every fibre of me cries in pain  
To God to remove you.

But surely my soul's best dream is still  
That one night pouring down shall swill  
Us away in an utter sleep, until  
We are one, smooth-rounded.  
Yet closely bitten in to me  
Is this armour of stiff reluctancy  
That keeps me impounded.

So, dear love, when another night  
Pours on us, lift your fingers white  
And strip me naked, touch me light,  
Light, light all over.  
For I ache most earnestly for your touch,  
Yet I cannot move, however much  
I would be your lover.

Night after night with a blemish of day  
Unblown and unblossomed has withered away;  
Come another night, come a new night, say  
    Will you pluck me apart?  
Will you open the amorous, aching bud  
Of my body, and loose the burning flood  
    That would leap to you from my heart?

David Herbert Lawrence

# Firelight And Nightfall

The darkness steals the forms of all the queens,  
But oh, the palms of his two black hands are red,  
Inflamed with binding up the sheaves of dead  
Hours that were once all glory and all queens.

And I remember all the sunny hours  
Of queens in hyacinth and skies of gold,  
And morning singing where the woods are scrolled  
And diapered above the chaunting flowers.

Here lamps are white like snowdrops in the grass;  
The town is like a churchyard, all so still  
And grey now night is here; nor will  
Another torn red sunset come to pass.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Giorno Dei Morti

Along the avenue of cypresses,  
All in their scarlet cloaks and surplices  
Of linen, go the chanting choristers,  
The priests in gold and black, the villagers. . .

And all along the path to the cemetery  
The round dark heads of men crowd silently,  
And black-scarved faces of womenfolk, wistfully  
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands  
With sunken head, and forgotten, folded hands;  
And at the foot of a grave a mother kneels  
With pale shut face, nor either hears nor feels

The coming of the chanting choristers  
Between the avenue of cypresses,  
The silence of the many villagers,  
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Gloire De Dijon

When she rises in the morning  
I linger to watch her;  
She spreads the bath-cloth underneath the window  
And the sunbeams catch her  
Glistening white on the shoulders,  
While down her sides the mellow  
Golden shadow glows as  
She stoops to the sponge, and her swung breasts  
Sway like full-blown yellow  
Gloire de Dijon roses.

She drips herself with water, and her shoulders  
Glisten as silver, they crumple up  
Like wet and falling roses, and I listen  
For the sluicing of their rain-dishevelled petals.  
In the window full of sunlight  
Concentrates her golden shadow  
Fold on fold, until it glows as  
Mellow as the glory roses.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Green

The dawn was apple-green,  
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,  
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green  
They shone, clear like flowers undone,  
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Grey Evening

When you went, how was it you carried with you  
My missal book of fine, flamboyant hours?  
My book of turrets and of red-thorn bowers,  
And skies of gold, and ladies in bright tissue?

Now underneath a blue-grey twilight, heaped  
Beyond the withering snow of the shorn fields  
Stands rubble of stunted houses; all is reaped  
And garnered that the golden daylight yields.

Dim lamps like yellow poppies glimmer among  
The shadowy stubble of the under-dusk,  
As farther off the scythe of night is swung,  
And little stars come rolling from their husk.

And all the earth is gone into a dust  
Of greyness mingled with a fume of gold,  
Covered with aged lichens, past with must,  
And all the sky has withered and gone cold.

And so I sit and scan the book of grey,  
Feeling the shadows like a blind man reading,  
All fearful lest I find the last words bleeding  
With wounds of sunset and the dying day.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Hibiscus And Salvia Flowers

\_Hark! Hark!  
The dogs do bark!  
It's the socialists come to town,  
None in rags and none in tags,  
Swaggering up and down\_.

Sunday morning,  
And from the Sicilian townlets skirting Etna  
The socialists have gathered upon us, to look at us.

How shall we know them when we see them?  
How shall we know them now they've come?

Not by their rags and not by their tags,  
Nor by any distinctive gown;  
The same unremarkable Sunday suit  
And hats cocked up and down.

Yet there they are, youths, loutishly  
Strolling in gangs and staring along the Corso  
With the gang-stare  
And a half-threatening envy  
At every \_foresti?re\_,  
Every lordly tuppenny foreigner from the hotels,  
fattening on the exchange.

\_Hark! Hark!  
The dogs do bark!  
It's the socialists in the town\_.

Sans rags, sans tags,  
Sans beards, sans bags,  
Sans any distinction at all except loutish commonness.

How do we know then, that they are they?  
Bolshevists.  
Leninists.  
Communists.  
Socialists.

-Ists! -Ists!

Alas, salvia and hibiscus flowers.  
Salvia and hibiscus flowers.

Listen again.  
Salvia and hibiscus flowers.  
Is it not so?  
Salvia and hibiscus flowers.

\_Hark! Hark!  
The dogs do hark\_!  
Salvia and hibiscus flowers.

Who smeared their doors with blood?  
Who on their breasts  
Put salvias and hibiscus?

Rosy, rosy scarlet,  
And flame-rage, golden-throated  
Bloom along the Corso on the living, perambulating bush.

Who said they might assume these blossoms?  
What god did they consult?

Rose-red, princess hibiscus, rolling her pointed Chinese  
petals!  
Azalea and camellia, single peony  
And pomegranate bloom and scarlet mallow-flower  
And all the eastern, exquisite royal plants  
That noble blood has brought us down the ages!  
Gently nurtured, frail and splendid  
Hibiscus flower-  
Alas, the Sunday coats of Sicilian bolshevists!

Pure blood, and noble blood, in the fine and rose-red veins;  
Small, interspersed with jewels of white gold  
Frail-filigreed among the rest;  
Rose of the oldest races of princesses, Polynesian  
Hibiscus.

Eve, in her happy moments,

Put hibiscus in her hair,  
Before she humbled herself, and knocked her knees with  
repentance.

Sicilian bolshevists,  
With hibiscus flowers in the buttonholes of your Sunday suits,  
Come now, speaking of rights, what right have you to this  
flower?

The exquisite and ageless aristocracy  
Of a peerless soul,  
Blessed are the pure in heart and the fathomless in bright  
pride;  
The loveliness that knows *\_noblesse oblige\_*;  
The native royalty of red hibiscus flowers;  
The exquisite assertion of new delicate life  
Risen from the roots:  
Is this how you'll have it, red-decked socialists,  
Hibiscus-breasted?

If it be so, I fly to join you,  
And if it be not so, brutes to pull down hibiscus flowers!

Or salvia!  
Or dragon-mouthed salvia with gold throat of wrath!  
Flame-flushed, enraged, splendid salvia,  
Cock-crested, crowing your orange scarlet like a tocsin  
Along the Corso all this Sunday morning.

Is your wrath red as salvias.  
You socialists?  
You with your grudging, envious, furtive rage,  
In Sunday suits and yellow boots along the Corso.  
You look well with your salvia flowers, I must say.  
Warrior-like, dawn-cock's-comb flaring flower  
Shouting forth flame to set the world on fire,  
The dust-heap of man's filthy world on fire,  
And burn it down, the gluttoned, stuffy world,  
And feed the young new fields of life with ash,  
With ash I say,  
Bolshevists,  
Your ashes even, my friends,

Among much other ash.

If there were salvia-savage bolshevists  
To burn the world back to manure-good ash.  
Wouldn't I stick the salvia in my coat!  
But these themselves must burn, these louts!

The dragon-faced,  
The anger-reddened, golden-throated salvia  
With its long antennae of rage put out  
Upon the frightened air.  
Ugh, how I love its fangs of perfect rage  
That gnash the air;  
The molten gold of its intolerable rage  
Hot in the throat.

I long to be a bolshevist  
And set the stinking rubbish-heap of this foul world  
Afire at a myriad scarlet points,  
A bolshevist, a salvia-face  
To lick the world with flame that licks it clean.

I long to see its chock-full crowdedness  
And gluttoned squirming populousness on fire  
Like a field of filthy weeds  
Burnt back to ash,  
And then to see the new, real souls sprout up.

Not this vast rotting cabbage patch we call the world;  
But from the ash-scarred fallow  
New wild souls.

Nettles, and a rose sprout,  
Hibiscus, and mere grass,  
Salvia still in a rage  
And almond honey-still,  
And fig-wort stinking for the carrion wasp;  
All the lot of them, and let them fight it out.

But not a trace of foul equality,  
Nor sound of still more foul human perfection.  
You need not clear the world like a cabbage patch for me;

Leave me my nettles,  
Let me fight the wicked, obstreperous weeds myself, and put  
them in their place,  
Severely in their place.  
I don't at all want to annihilate them,  
I like a row with them.  
But I won't be put on a cabbage-idealistic level of equality  
with them.

What rot, to see the cabbage and hibiscus-tree  
As equals!  
What rot, to say the louts along the Corso  
In Sunday suits and yellow shoes  
Are my equals!  
I am their superior, saluting the hibiscus flower, not them.  
The same I say to the profiteers from the hotels, the money-  
fat-ones,  
Profiteers here being called dog-fish, stinking dog-fish,  
sharks.  
The same I say to the pale and elegant persons.  
Pale-face authorities loitering tepidly:  
\_That I salute the red hibiscus flowers  
And send mankind to its inferior blazes\_.  
Mankind's inferior blazes,  
And these along with it, all the inferior lot-  
These bolshevists,  
These dog-fish,  
These precious and ideal ones,  
All rubbish ready for fire.

And I salute hibiscus and the salvia flower  
Upon the breasts of loutish bolshevists,  
Damned loutish bolshevists,  
Who perhaps will do the business after all,  
In the long run, in spite of themselves.

Meanwhile, alas  
For me no fellow-men,  
No salvia-frenzied comrades, antennae  
Of yellow-red, outreaching, living wrath  
Upon the smouldering air,  
And throat of brimstone-molten angry gold.

Red, angry men are a race extinct, alas!

Never

To be a bolshevist

With a hibiscus flower behind my ear

In sign of life, of lovely, dangerous life

And passionate disquality of men;

In sign of dauntless, silent violets,

And impudent nettles grabbing the under-earth,

And cabbages born to be cut and eat,

And salvia fierce to crow and shout for fight,

And rosy-red hibiscus wincingly

Unfolding all her coiled and lovely self

In a doubtful world.

Never, bolshevistically

To be able to stand for all these!

Alas, alas, I have got to leave it all

To the youths in Sunday suits and yellow shoes

Who have pulled down the salvia flowers

And rosy delicate hibiscus flowers

And everything else to their disgusting level,

Never, of course, to put anything up again.

But yet

If they pull all the world down,

The process will amount to the same in the end.

Instead of flame and flame-clean ash

Slow watery rotting back to level muck

And final humus.

Whence the re-start.

And still I cannot bear it

That they take hibiscus and the salvia flower.

David Herbert Lawrence

# How Beastly The Bourgeois Is

How beastly the bourgeois is  
especially the male of the species--

Presentable, eminently presentable--  
shall I make you a present of him?

Isn't he handsome? Isn't he healthy? Isn't he a fine specimen?  
Doesn't he look the fresh clean Englishman, outside?  
Isn't it God's own image? tramping his thirty miles a day  
after partridges, or a little rubber ball?  
wouldn't you like to be like that, well off, and quite the  
thing

Oh, but wait!  
Let him meet a new emotion, let him be faced with another  
man's need,  
let him come home to a bit of moral difficulty, let life  
face him with a new demand on his understanding  
and then watch him go soggy, like a wet meringue.  
Watch him turn into a mess, either a fool or a bully.  
Just watch the display of him, confronted with a new  
demand on his intelligence,  
a new life-demand.

How beastly the bourgeois is  
especially the male of the species--

Nicely groomed, like a mushroom  
standing there so sleek and erect and eyeable--  
and like a fungus, living on the remains of a bygone life  
sucking his life out of the dead leaves of greater life  
than his own.

And even so, he's stale, he's been there too long.  
Touch him, and you'll find he's all gone inside  
just like an old mushroom, all wormy inside, and hollow  
under a smooth skin and an upright appearance.

Full of seething, wormy, hollow feelings



rather nasty--  
How beastly the bourgeois is!

Standing in their thousands, these appearances, in damp  
England

what a pity they can't all be kicked over  
like sickening toadstools, and left to melt back, swiftly  
into the soil of England.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Humming-Bird

I can imagine, in some otherworld  
Primeval-dumb, far back  
In that most awful stillness, that only gasped and hummed,  
Humming-birds raced down the avenues.

Before anything had a soul,  
While life was a heave of Matter, half inanimate,  
This little bit chipped off in brilliance  
And went whizzing through the slow, vast, succulent stems.

I believe there were no flowers, then  
In the world where the humming-bird flashed ahead of creation.  
I believe he pierced the slow vegetable veins with his long beak.

Probably he was big  
As mosses, and little lizards, they say were once big.  
Probably he was a jabbing, terrifying monster.

We look at him through the wrong end of the long telescope of Time,  
Luckily for us.

David Herbert Lawrence

## If You Are A Man

If you are a man, and believe in the destiny of mankind  
then say to yourself: we will cease to care  
about property and money and mechanical devices,  
and open our consciousness to the deep, mysterious life  
that we are now cut off from.

The machine shall be abolished from the earth again;  
it is a mistake that mankind has made;  
money shall cease to be, and property shall cease to perplex  
and we will find the way to immediate contact with life  
and with one another.

To know the moon as we have never known  
yet she is knowable.  
To know a man as we have never known  
a man, as never yet a man was knowable, yet still shall be.

David Herbert Lawrence

# In A Boat

See the stars, love,  
In the water much clearer and brighter  
Than those above us, and whiter,  
Like nenuphars.

Star-shadows shine, love,  
How many stars in your bowl?  
How many shadows in your soul,  
Only mine, love, mine?

When I move the oars, love,  
See how the stars are tossed,  
Distorted, the brightest lost.  
—So that bright one of yours, love.

The poor waters spill  
The stars, waters broken, forsaken.  
—The heavens are not shaken, you say, love,  
Its stars stand still.

There, did you see  
That spark fly up at us; even  
Stars are not safe in heaven.  
—What of yours, then, love, yours?

What then, love, if soon  
Your light be tossed over a wave?  
Will you count the darkness a grave,  
And swoon, love, swoon?

David Herbert Lawrence

# In Trouble And Shame

I look at the swaling sunset  
And wish I could go also  
Through the red doors beyond the black-purple bar.

I wish that I could go  
Through the red doors where I could put off  
My shame like shoes in the porch,  
My pain like garments,  
And leave my flesh discarded lying  
Like luggage of some departed traveller  
Gone one knows not where.

Then I would turn round,  
And seeing my cast-off body lying like lumber,  
I would laugh with joy.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Intimates

Don't you care for my love? she said bitterly.

I handed her the mirror, and said:

Please address these questions to the proper person!

Please make all requests to head-quarters!

In all matters of emotional importance

please approach the supreme authority direct! -

So I handed her the mirror.

And she would have broken it over my head,

but she caught sight of her own reflection

and that held her spellbound for two seconds

while I fled.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Irony

Always, sweetheart,  
Carry into your room the blossoming boughs of cherry,  
Almond and apple and pear diffuse with light, that very  
Soon strews itself on the floor; and keep the radiance of spring  
Fresh quivering; keep the sunny-swift March-days waiting  
In a little throng at your door, and admit the one who is plaiting  
Her hair for womanhood, and play awhile with her, then bid her depart.

A come and go of March-day loves  
Through the flower-vine, trailing screen;  
A fluttering in of doves.  
Then a launch abroad of shrinking doves  
Over the waste where no hope is seen  
Of open hands:  
Dance in and out  
Small-bosomed girls of the spring of love,  
With a bubble of laughter, and shrilly shout  
Of mirth; then the dripping of tears on your glove.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Kangaroo

Delicate mother Kangaroo

Sitting up there rabbit-wise, but huge, plump-weighted,  
And lifting her beautiful slender face, oh! so much more  
gently and finely lined than a rabbit's, or than a hare's,  
Lifting her face to nibble at a round white peppermint drop  
which she loves, sensitive mother Kangaroo.

Her sensitive, long, pure-bred face.

Her full antipodal eyes, so dark,  
So big and quiet and remote, having watched so many  
empty dawns in silent Australia.

Her little loose hands, and drooping Victorian shoulders.  
And then her great weight below the waist, her vast pale belly,  
With a thin young yellow little paw hanging out, and  
straggle of a long thin ear, like ribbon,  
Like a funny trimming to the middle of her belly, thin  
little dangle of an immature paw, and one thin ear.

Her belly, her big haunches

And, in addition, the great muscular python-stretch of her tail.

There, she shan't have any more peppermint drops.

So she wistfully, sensitively sniffs the air, and then turns,  
goes off in slow sad leaps  
On the long flat skis of her legs,  
Steered and propelled by that steel-strong snake of a tail.

Stops again, half turns, inquisitive to look back.

While something stirs quickly in her belly, and a lean little  
face comes out, as from a window,  
Peaked and a bit dismayed,  
Only to disappear again quickly away from the sight of the  
world, to snuggle down in the warmth,  
Leaving the trail of a different paw hanging out.

Still she watches with eternal, cocked wistfulness!

How full her eyes are, like the full, fathomless, shining  
eyes of an Australian black-boy



Who has been lost so many centuries on the margins of  
existence!

She watches with insatiable wistfulness.

Untold centuries of watching for something to come,  
For a new signal from life, in that silent lost land of the  
South.

Where nothing bites but insects and snakes and the sun,  
small life.

Where no bull roared, no cow ever lowed, no stag cried,  
no leopard screeched, no lion coughed, no dog barked,  
But all was silent save for parrots occasionally, in the  
haunted blue bush.

Wistfully watching, with wonderful liquid eyes.

And all her weight, all her blood, dropping sackwise down  
towards the earth's centre,  
And the live little-one taking in its paw at the door of her  
belly.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Last Words To Miriam

Yours is the shame and sorrow,  
    But the disgrace is mine;  
Your love was dark and thorough,  
Mine was the love of the sun for a flower  
    He creates with his shine.

I was diligent to explore you,  
    Blossom you stalk by stalk,  
Till my fire of creation bore you  
Shrivelling down in the final dour  
    Anguish -- then I suffered a balk.

I knew your pain, and it broke  
    My fine, craftsman's nerve;  
Your body quailed at my stroke,  
And my courage failed to give you the last  
    Fine torture you did deserve.

You are shapely, you are adorned,  
    But opaque and dull in the flesh,  
Who, had I but pierced with the thorned  
Fire-threshing anguish, were fused and cast  
    In a lovely illumined mesh.

Like a painted window: the best  
    Suffering burnt through your flesh,  
Undrossed it and left it blest  
With a quivering sweet wisdom of grace: but now  
    Who shall take you afresh?

Now who will burn you free  
    From your body's terrors and dross,  
Since the fire has failed in me?  
What man will stoop in your flesh to plough  
    The shrieking cross?

A mute, nearly beautiful thing  
    Is your face, that fills me with shame  
As I see it hardening,

Warping the perfect image of God,  
And darkening my eternal fame.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Liaison

A big bud of moon hangs out of the twilight,  
Star-spiders spinning their thread  
Hang high suspended, withouten respite  
Watching us overhead.

Come then under the trees, where the leaf-cloths  
Curtain us in so dark  
That here we're safe from even the ermin-moth's  
Flitting remark.

Here in this swarthy, secret tent,  
Where black boughs flap the ground,  
You shall draw the thorn from my discontent,  
Surgeon me sound.

This rare, rich night! For in here  
Under the yew-tree tent  
The darkness is loveliest where I could sear  
You like frankincense into scent.

Here not even the stars can spy us,  
Not even the white moths write  
With their little pale signs on the wall, to try us  
And set us affright.

Kiss but then the dust from off my lips,  
But draw the turgid pain  
From my breast to your bosom, eclipse  
My soul again.

Waste me not, I beg you, waste  
Not the inner night:  
Taste, oh taste and let me taste  
The core of delight.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Lies About Love

We are a liars, because  
the truth of yesterday becomes a lie tomorrow,  
whereas letters are fixed,  
and we live by the letter of truth.  
The love I feel for my friend, this year,  
is different from the love I felt last year.  
If it were not so, it would be a lie.  
Yet we reiterate love! love! love!  
as if it were a coin with a fixed value  
instead of a flower that dies, and opens a different bud.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Listening

I listen to the stillness of you,  
My dear, among it all;  
I feel your silence touch my words as I talk,  
And take them in thrall.

My words fly off a forge  
The length of a spark;  
I see the night-sky easily sip them  
Up in the dark.

The lark sings loud and glad,  
Yet I am not loth  
That silence should take the song and the bird  
And lose them both.

A train goes roaring south,  
The steam-flag flying;  
I see the stealthy shadow of silence  
Alongside going.

And off the forge of the world,  
Whirling in the draught of life,  
Go sparks of myriad people, filling  
The night with strife.

Yet they never change the darkness  
Or blench it with noise;  
Alone on the perfect silence  
The stars are buoys.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Lotus Hurt By The Cold

How many times, like lotus lilies risen  
Upon the surface of a river, there  
Have risen floating on my blood the rare  
Soft glimmers of my hope escaped from prison.

So I am clothed all over with the light  
And sensitive beautiful blossoming of passion;  
Till naked for her in the finest fashion  
The flowers of all my mud swim into sight.

And then I offer all myself unto  
This woman who likes to love me: but she turns  
A look of hate upon the flower that burns  
To break and pour her out its precious dew.

And slowly all the blossom shuts in pain,  
And all the lotus buds of love sink over  
To die unopened: when my moon-faced lover,  
Kind on the weight of suffering, smiles again.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Lui Et Elle

She is large and matronly  
And rather dirty,  
A little sardonic-looking, as if domesticity had driven her to it.  
Though what she does, except lay four eggs at random in the garden once a year  
And put up with her husband,  
I don't know.

She likes to eat.  
She hurries up, striding reared on long uncanny legs  
When food is going.  
Oh yes, she can make haste when she likes.  
She snaps the soft bread from my hand in great mouthfuls,  
Opening her rather pretty wedge of an iron, pristine face  
Into an enormously wide-beaked mouth  
Like sudden curved scissors,  
And gulping at more than she can swallow, and working her thick, soft tongue,  
And having the bread hanging over her chin.

O Mistress, Mistress,  
Reptile mistress,  
Your eye is very dark, very bright,  
And it never softens  
Although you watch.

She knows,  
She knows well enough to come for food,  
Yet she sees me not;  
Her bright eye sees, but not me, not anything,  
Sightful, sightless, seeing and visionless,  
Reptile mistress.

Taking bread in her curved, gaping, toothless mouth,  
She has no qualm when she catches my finger in her steel overlapping gums,  
But she hangs on, and my shout and my shrinking are nothing to her.  
She does not even know she is nipping me with her curved beak.  
Snake-like she draws at my finger, while I drag it in horror away.

Mistress, reptile mistress,  
You are almost too large, I am almost frightened.



He is much smaller,  
Dapper beside her,  
And ridiculously small.

Her laconic eye has an earthy, materialistic look,  
His, poor darling, is almost fiery.  
His wimple, his blunt-prowed face,  
His low forehead, his skinny neck, his long, scaled, striving legs,  
So striving, striving,  
Are all more delicate than she,  
And he has a cruel scar on his shell.

Poor darling, biting at her feet,  
Running beside her like a dog, biting her earthy, splay feet,  
Nipping her ankles,  
Which she drags apathetic away, though without retreating into her shell.

Agelessly silent,  
And with a grim, reptile determination,  
Cold, voiceless age-after-age behind him, serpents' long obstinacy  
Of horizontal persistence.

Little old man  
Scuffling beside her, bending down, catching his opportunity,  
Parting his steel-trap face, so suddenly, and seizing her scaly ankle,  
And hanging grimly on,  
Letting go at last as she drags away,  
And closing his steel-trap face.

His steel-trap, stoic, ageless, handsome face.  
Alas, what a fool he looks in this scuffle.

And how he feels it!  
The lonely rambler, the stoic, dignified stalker through chaos,  
The immune, the animate,  
Enveloped in isolation,  
Fore-runner.  
Now look at him!

Alas, the spear is through the side of his isolation.  
His adolescence saw him crucified into sex,

Doomed, in the long crucifixion of desire, to seek his consummation beyond himself.

Divided into passionate duality,  
He, so finished and immune, now broken into desirous fragmentariness,  
Doomed to make an intolerable fool of himself  
In his effort toward completion again.

Poor little earthy house-inhabiting Osiris,  
The mysterious bull tore him at adolescence into pieces,  
And he must struggle after reconstruction, ignominiously.

And so behold him following the tail  
Of that mud-hovel of his slowly rambling spouse,  
Like some unhappy bull at the tail of a cow,  
But with more than bovine, grim, earth-dank persistence.

Suddenly seizing the ugly ankle as she stretches out to walk,  
Roaming over the sods,  
Or, if it happen to show, at her pointed, heavy tail  
Beneath the low-dropping back-board of her shell.

Their two shells like domed boats bumping,  
Hers huge, his small;  
Their splay feet rambling and rowing like paddles,  
And stumbling mixed up in one another,  
In the race of love --  
Two tortoises,  
She huge, he small.

She seems earthily apathetic,  
And he has a reptile's awful persistence.

I heard a woman pitying her, pitying the Mère Tortue.  
While I, I pity Monsieur.  
'He pesters her and torments her,' said the woman.  
How much more is he pestered and tormented, say I.

What can he do?  
He is dumb, he is visionless,  
Conceptionless.  
His black, sad-lidded eye sees but beholds not  
As her earthen mound moves on,

But he catches the folds of vulnerable, leathery skin,  
Nail-studded, that shake beneath her shell,  
And drags at these with his beak,  
Drags and drags and bites,  
While she pulls herself free, and rows her dull mound along.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Malade

The sick grapes on the chair by the bed lie prone; at the window  
The tassel of the blind swings gently, tapping the pane,  
As a little wind comes in.  
The room is the hollow rind of a fruit, a gourd  
Scooped out and dry, where a spider,  
Folded in its legs as in a bed,  
Lies on the dust, watching where is nothing to see but twilight and walls.

And if the day outside were mine! What is the day  
But a grey cave, with great grey spider-cloths hanging  
Low from the roof, and the wet dust falling softly from them  
Over the wet dark rocks, the houses, and over  
The spiders with white faces, that scuttle on the floor of the cave!  
I am choking with creeping, grey confinedness.

But somewhere birds, beside a lake of light, spread wings  
Larger than the largest fans, and rise in a stream upwards  
And upwards on the sunlight that rains invisible,  
So that the birds are like one wafted feather,  
Small and ecstatic suspended over a vast spread country.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Mating

Round clouds roll in the arms of the wind,  
The round earth rolls in a clasp of blue sky,  
And see, where the budding hazels are thinned,  
    The wild anemones lie  
In undulating shivers beneath the wind.

Over the blue of the waters ply  
White ducks, a living flotilla of cloud;  
And, look you, floating just thereby,  
    The blue-gleamed drake stems proud  
Like Abraham, whose seed should multiply.

In the lustrous gleam of the water, there  
Scramble seven toads across the silk, obscure leaves,  
Seven toads that meet in the dusk to share  
    The darkness that interweaves  
The sky and earth and water and live things everywhere.

Look now, through the woods where the beech-green spurts  
Like a storm of emerald snow, look, see  
A great bay stallion dances, skirts  
    The bushes sumptuously,  
Going outward now in the spring to his brief deserts.

Ah love, with your rich, warm face aglow,  
What sudden expectation opens you  
So wide as you watch the catkins blow  
    Their dust from the birch on the blue  
Lift of the pulsing wind—ah, tell me you know!

Ah, surely! Ah, sure from the golden sun  
A quickening, masculine gleam floats in to all  
Us creatures, people and flowers undone,  
    Lying open under his thrall,  
As he begets the year in us. What, then, would you shun?

Why, I should think that from the earth there fly  
Fine thrills to the neighbour stars, fine yellow beams  
Thrown lustily off from our full-blown, high

Bursting globe of dreams,  
To quicken the spheres that are virgin still in the sky.

Do you not hear each morsel thrill  
With joy at travelling to plant itself within  
The expectant one, therein to instil  
New rapture, new shape to win,  
From the thick of life wake up another will?

Surely, and if that I would spill  
The vivid, ah, the fiery surplus of life,  
From off my brimming measure, to fill  
You, and flush you rife  
With increase, do you call it evil, and always evil?

David Herbert Lawrence

# Meeting Among The Mountains

The little pansies by the road have turned  
Away their purple faces and their gold,  
And evening has taken all the bees from the thyme,  
And all the scent is shed away by the cold.

Against the hard and pale blue evening sky  
The mountain's new-dropped summer snow is clear  
Glistening in steadfast stillness: like transcendent  
Clean pain sending on us a chill down here.

Christ on the Cross! -- his beautiful young man's body  
Has fallen dead upon the nails, and hangs  
White and loose at last, with all the pain  
Drawn on his mouth, eyes broken at last by his pangs.

And slowly down the mountain road, belated,  
A bullock wagon comes; so I am ashamed  
To gaze any more at the Christ, whom the mountain snows  
Whitely confront; I wait on the grass, am lamed.

The breath of the bullock stains the hard, chill air,  
The band is across its brow, and it scarcely seems  
To draw the load, so still and slow it moves,  
While the driver on the shaft sits crouched in dreams.

Surely about his sunburnt face is something  
That vexes me with wonder. He sits so still  
Here among all this silence, crouching forward,  
Dreaming and letting the bullock take its will.

I stand aside on the grass to let them go;  
-- And Christ, I have met his accusing eyes again,  
The brown eyes black with misery and hate, that look  
Full in my own, and the torment starts again.

One moment the hate leaps at me standing there,  
One moment I see the stillness of agony,  
Something frozen in the silence that dare not be  
Loosed, one moment the darkness frightens me.

Then among the averted pansies, beneath the high  
White peaks of snow, at the foot of the sunken Christ  
I stand in a chill of anguish, trying to say  
The joy I bought was not too highly priced.

But he has gone, motionless, hating me,  
Living as the mountains do, because they are strong,  
With a pale, dead Christ on the crucifix of his heart,  
And breathing the frozen memory of his wrong.

Still in his nostrils the frozen breath of despair,  
And heart like a cross that bears dead agony  
Of naked love, clenched in his fists the shame,  
And in his belly the smouldering hate of me.

And I, as I stand in the cold, averted flowers,  
Feel the shame-wounds in his hands pierce through my own,  
And breathe despair that turns my lungs to stone  
And know the dead Christ weighing on my bone.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Monologue Of A Mother

This is the last of all, this is the last!

I must hold my hands, and turn my face to the fire,  
I must watch my dead days fusing together in dross,  
Shape after shape, and scene after scene from my past  
Fusing to one dead mass in the sinking fire  
Where the ash on the dying coals grows swiftly, like heavy moss.

Strange he is, my son, whom I have awaited like a loyer,  
Strange to me like a captive in a foreign country, haunting  
The confines and gazing out on the land where the wind is free;  
White and gaunt, with wistful eyes that hover  
Always on the distance, as if his soul were chaunting  
The monotonous weird of departure away from me.

Like a strange white bird blown out of the frozen seas,  
Like a bird from the far north blown with a broken wing  
Into our sooty garden, he drags and beats  
From place to place perpetually, seeking release  
From me, from the hand of my love which creeps up, needing  
His happiness, whilst he in displeasure retreats.

I must look away from him, for my faded eyes  
Like a cringing dog at his heels offend him now,  
Like a toothless hound pursuing him with my will,  
Till he chafes at my crouching persistence, and a sharp spark flies  
In my soul from under the sudden frown of his brow,  
As he blenches and turns away, and my heart stands still.

This is the last, it will not be any more.  
All my life I have borne the burden of myself,  
All the long years of sitting in my husband's house,  
Never have I said to myself as he closed the door:  
"Now I am caught! —You are hopelessly lost, O Self,  
You are frightened with joy, my heart, like a frightened mouse."

Three times have I offered myself, three times rejected.  
It will not be any more. No more, my son, my son!  
Never to know the glad freedom of obedience, since long ago  
The angel of childhood kissed me and went. I expected

Another would take me,—and now, my son, O my son,  
I must sit awhile and wait, and never know  
The loss of myself, till death comes, who cannot fail.

Death, in whose service is nothing of gladness, takes me:  
For the lips and the eyes of God are behind a veil.  
And the thought of the lipless voice of the Father shakes me  
With fear, and fills my eyes with the tears of desire,  
And my heart rebels with anguish as night draws nigher.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Mystery

Now I am all  
One bowl of kisses,  
Such as the tall  
Slim votaresses  
Of Egypt filled  
For a God's excesses.

I lift to you  
My bowl of kisses,  
And through the temple's  
Blue recesses  
Cry out to you  
In wild caresses.

And to my lips'  
Bright crimson rim  
The passion slips,  
And down my slim  
White body drips  
The shining hymn.

And still before  
The altar I  
Exult the bowl  
Brimful, and cry  
To you to stoop  
And drink, Most High.

Oh drink me up  
That I may be  
Within your cup  
Like a Mystery,  
Like wine that is still  
In ecstasy.

Glimmering still  
In ecstasy,  
Commingled wines  
Of you and me

In One fulfill, ...  
The Mystery.

David Herbert Lawrence

# New Year's Eve

There are only two things now,  
The great black night scooped out  
And this fireglow.

This fireglow, the core,  
And we the two ripe pips  
That are held in store.

Listen, the darkness rings  
As it circulates round our fire.  
Take off your things.

Your shoulders, your bruised throat!  
Your breasts, your nakedness!  
This fiery coat!

As the darkness flickers and dips,  
As the firelight falls and leaps  
From your feet to your lips!

David Herbert Lawrence

# New Year's Night

Now you are mine, to-night at last I say it;  
You're a dove I have bought for sacrifice,  
And to-night I slay it.

Here in my arms my naked sacrifice!  
Death, do you hear, in my arms I am bringing  
My offering, bought at great price.

She's a silvery dove worth more than all I've got.  
Now I offer her up to the ancient, inexorable God,  
Who knows me not.

Look, she's a wonderful dove, without blemish or spot!  
I sacrifice all in her, my last of the world,  
Pride, strength, all the lot.

All, all on the altar! And death swooping down  
Like a falcon. 'Tis God has taken the victim;  
I have won my renown.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Nostalgia

THE WANING MOON looks upward; this grey night  
Slopes round the heavens in one smooth curve  
Of easy sailing; odd red wicks serve  
To show where the ships at sea move out of sight.

The place is palpable me, for here I was born  
Of this self-same darkness. Yet the shadowy house below  
Is out of bounds, and only the old ghosts know  
I have come, I feel them whimper in welcome, and mourn.

My father suddenly died in the harvesting corn  
And the place is no longer ours. Watching, I hear  
No sound from the strangers, the place is dark, and fear  
Opens my eyes till the roots of my vision seems torn.

Can I go no nearer, never towards the door?  
The ghosts and I we mourn together, and shrink  
In the shadow of the cart-shed. Must we hover on the brink  
Forever, and never enter the homestead any more?

Is it irrevocable? Can I really not go  
Through the open yard-way? Can I not go past the sheds  
And through to the mowie?- Only the dead in their beds  
Can know the fearful anguish that this is so.

I kiss the stones, I kiss the moss on the wall,  
And wish I could pass impregnate into the place.  
I wish I could take it all in a last embrace.  
I wish with my breast I here could annihilate it all.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Nothing To Save

There is nothing to save, now all is lost,  
but a tiny core of stillness in the heart  
like the eye of a violet.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Patience

A wind comes from the north  
Blowing little flocks of birds  
Like spray across the town,  
And a train, roaring forth,  
Rushes stampeding down  
With cries and flying curds  
Of steam, out of the darkening north.

Whither I turn and set  
Like a needle steadfastly,  
Waiting ever to get  
The news that she is free;  
But ever fixed, as yet,  
To the lode of her agony.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Perfidy

Hollow rang the house when I knocked on the door,  
And I lingered on the threshold with my hand  
Upraised to knock and knock once more:  
Listening for the sound of her feet across the floor,  
Hollow re-echoed my heart.

The low-hung lamps stretched down the road  
With shadows drifting underneath,  
With a music of soft, melodious feet  
Quickening my hope as I hastened to meet  
The low-hung light of her eyes.

The golden lamps down the street went out,  
The last car trailed the night behind;  
And I in the darkness wandered about  
With a flutter of hope and of dark-shut doubt  
In the dying lamp of my love.

Two brown ponies trotting slowly  
Stopped at a dim-lit trough to drink:  
The dark van drummed down the distance slowly;  
While the city stars so dim and holy  
Drew nearer to search through the streets.

A hastening car swept shameful past,  
I saw her hid in the shadow,  
I saw her step to the curb, and fast  
Run to the silent door, where last  
I had stood with my hand uplifted.  
She clung to the door in her haste to enter,  
Entered, and quickly cast  
It shut behind her, leaving the street aghast.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Piano

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.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Reproach

Had I but known yesterday,  
Helen, you could discharge the ache  
    Out of the cloud;  
Had I known yesterday you could take  
The turgid electric ache away,  
    Drink it up with your proud  
White body, as lovely white lightning  
Is drunk from an agonised sky by the earth,  
I might have hated you, Helen.

But since my limbs gushed full of fire,  
Since from out of my blood and bone  
    Poured a heavy flame  
To you, earth of my atmosphere, stone  
Of my steel, lovely white flint of desire,  
    You have no name.  
Earth of my swaying atmosphere,  
Substance of my inconstant breath,  
I cannot but cleave to you.

Since you have drunken up the drear  
Painful electric storm, and death  
    Is washed from the blue  
Of my eyes, I see you beautiful.  
You are strong and passive and beautiful,  
I come like winds that uncertain hover;  
    But you  
Are the earth I hover over.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Restlessness

At the open door of the room I stand and look at the night,  
Hold my hand to catch the raindrops, that slant into sight,  
Arriving grey from the darkness above suddenly into the light of the room.  
I will escape from the hollow room, the box of light,  
And be out in the bewildering darkness, which is always fecund, which might  
Mate my hungry soul with a germ of its womb.

I will go out to the night, as a man goes down to the shore  
To draw his net through the surf's thin line, at the dawn before  
The sun warms the sea, little, lonely and sad, sifting the sobbing tide.  
I will sift the surf that edges the night, with my net, the four  
Strands of my eyes and my lips and my hands and my feet, sifting the store  
Of flotsam until my soul is tired or satisfied.

I will catch in my eyes' quick net  
The faces of all the women as they go past,  
Bend over them with my soul, to cherish the wet  
Cheeks and wet hair a moment, saying: "Is it you?"  
Looking earnestly under the dark umbrellas, held fast  
Against the wind; and if, where the lamplight blew  
Its rainy swill about us, she answered me  
With a laugh and a merry wildness that it was she  
Who was seeking me, and had found me at last to free  
Me now from the stunting bonds of my chastity,  
How glad I should be!

Moving along in the mysterious ebb of the night  
Pass the men whose eyes are shut like anemones in a dark pool;  
Why don't they open with vision and speak to me, what have they in sight?  
Why do I wander aimless among them, desirous fool?  
I can always linger over the huddled books on the stalls,  
Always gladden my amorous fingers with the touch of their leaves,  
Always kneel in courtship to the shelves in the doorways, where falls  
The shadow, always offer myself to one mistress, who always receives.

But oh, it is not enough, it is all no good.  
There is something I want to feel in my running blood,  
Something I want to touch; I must hold my face to the rain,  
I must hold my face to the wind, and let it explain

Me its life as it hurries in secret.

I will trail my hands again through the drenched, cold leaves

Till my hands are full of the chillness and touch of leaves,

Till at length they induce me to sleep, and to forget.

David Herbert Lawrence

## Scent Of Irises

A faint, sickening scent of irises  
Persists all morning. Here in a jar on the table  
A fine proud spike of purple irises  
Rising above the class-room litter, makes me unable  
To see the class's lifted and bended faces  
Save in a broken pattern, amid purple and gold and sable.

I can smell the gorgeous bog-end, in its breathless  
Dazzle of may-blobs, when the marigold glare overcast you  
With fire on your cheeks and your brow and your chin as you dipped  
Your face in the marigold bunch, to touch and contrast you,  
Your own dark mouth with the bridal faint lady-smocks,  
Dissolved on the golden sorcery you should not outlast.

You amid the bog-end's yellow incantation,  
You sitting in the cowslips of the meadow above,  
Me, your shadow on the bog-flame, flowery may-blobs,  
Me full length in the cowslips, muttering you love;  
You, your soul like a lady-smock, lost, evanescent,  
You with your face all rich, like the sheen of a dove.

You are always asking, do I remember, remember  
The butter-cup bog-end where the flowers rose up  
And kindled you over deep with a cast of gold?  
You ask again, do the healing days close up  
The open darkness which then drew us in,  
The dark which then drank up our brimming cup.

You upon the dry, dead beech-leaves, in the fire of night  
Burnt like a sacrifice; you invisible;  
Only the fire of darkness, and the scent of you!  
—And yes, thank God, it still is possible  
The healing days shall close the darkness up  
Wherein we fainted like a smoke or dew.

Like vapour, dew, or poison. Now, thank God,  
The fire of night is gone, and your face is ash  
Indistinguishable on the grey, chill day;  
The night had burst us out, at last the good

Dark fire burns on untroubled, without clash  
Of you upon the dead leaves saying me Yea.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Search For Truth

Search for nothing any more, nothing  
except truth.

Be very still, and try and get at the truth.

And the first question to ask yourself is:  
How great a liar am I?

David Herbert Lawrence

# Self-Pity

I never saw a wild thing  
sorry for itself.

A small bird will drop frozen dead from a bough  
without ever having felt sorry for itself.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Service Of All The Dead

Between the avenues of cypresses,  
All in their scarlet cloaks, and surplices  
Of linen, go the chaunting choristers,  
The priests in gold and black, the villagers.

And all along the path to the cemetery  
The round, dark heads of men crowd silently  
And black-scarved faces of women-folk, wistfully  
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands  
With sunken head, and forgotten, folded hands;  
And at the foot of a grave a woman kneels  
With pale shut face, and neither hears not feels

The coming of the chaunting choristers  
Between the avenues of cypresses,  
The silence of the many villagers,  
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Sickness

WAVING slowly before me, pushed into the dark,□  
Unseen my hands explore the silence, drawing the bark□  
Of my body slowly behind.□

Nothing to meet my fingers but the fleece of night□  
Invisible blinding my face and my eyes! What if in their flight□  
My hands should touch the door!□

What if I suddenly stumble, and push the door□  
Open, and a great grey dawn swirls over my feet, before□  
I can draw back!□

What if unwitting I set the door of eternity wide  
And am swept away in the horrible dawn, am gone down the tide□  
Of eternal hereafter!□

Catch my hands, my darling, between your breasts.□  
Take them away from their venture, before fate wrests□  
The meaning out of them.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Silence

Since I lost you I am silence-haunted,  
Sounds wave their little wings  
A moment, then in weariness settle  
On the flood that soundless swings.

Whether the people in the street  
Like pattering ripples go by,  
Or whether the theatre sighs and sighs  
With a loud, hoarse sigh:

Or the wind shakes a ravel of light  
Over the dead-black river,  
Or night's last echoing  
Makes the daybreak shiver:

I feel the silence waiting  
To take them all up again  
In its vast completeness, enfolding  
The sound of men.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Snake

A snake came to my water-trough  
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,  
To drink there.  
In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-tree  
I came down the steps with my pitcher  
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before  
me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom  
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of  
the stone trough  
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,  
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,  
He sipped with his straight mouth,  
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,  
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,  
And I, like a second comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,  
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,  
And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a moment,  
And stooped and drank a little more,  
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels of the earth  
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.  
The voice of my education said to me  
He must be killed,  
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are venomous.

And voices in me said, If you were a man  
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,  
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my water-trough  
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,  
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him? Was it perversity, that I longed to

talk to him? Was it humility, to feel so honoured?  
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:

*<i>If you were not afraid, you would kill him!</i>*

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid, But even so, honoured still more  
That he should seek my hospitality  
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough  
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,  
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,  
Seeming to lick his lips,  
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,  
And slowly turned his head,  
And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,  
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round  
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,  
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther,  
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black  
hole,  
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after,  
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,  
I picked up a clumsy log  
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,  
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in undignified haste.  
Writhed like lightning, and was gone  
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,  
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.  
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!  
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education.

And I thought of the albatross

And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,  
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,  
Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords  
Of life.

And I have something to expiate:  
A pettiness.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Snap-Dragon

She bade me follow to her garden where  
The mellow sunlight stood as in a cup  
Between the old grey walls; I did not dare  
To raise my face, I did not dare look up  
Lest her bright eyes like sparrows should fly in  
My windows of discovery and shrill 'Sin!'

So with a downcast mien and laughing voice  
I followed, followed the swing of her white dress  
That rocked in a lilt along: I watched the poise  
Of her feet as they flew for a space, then paused to press  
The grass deep down with the royal burden of her:  
And gladly I'd offered my breast to the tread of her.

'I like to see,' she said, and she crouched her down,  
She sunk into my sight like a settling bird;  
And her bosom crouched in the confines of her gown  
Like heavy birds at rest there, softly stirred  
By her measured breaths: 'I like to see,' said she,  
'The snap-dragon put out his tongue at me.'

She laughed, she reached her hand out to the flower  
Closing its crimson throat: my own throat in her power  
Strangled, my heart swelled up so full  
As if it would burst its wineskin in my throat,  
Choke me in my own crimson; I watched her pull  
The gorge of the gaping flower, till the blood did float

Over my eyes and I was blind --  
Her large brown hand stretched over  
The windows of my mind,  
And in the dark I did discover  
Things I was out to find:

My grail, a brown bowl twined  
With swollen veins that met in the wrist,  
Under whose brown the amethyst  
I longed to taste: and I longed to turn  
My heart's red measure in her cup,

I longed to feel my hot blood burn  
With the lambent amethyst in her cup.

Then suddenly she looked up  
And I was blind in a tawny-gold day  
Till she took her eyes away. So she came down from above  
And emptied my heart of love . . .  
So I held my heart aloft  
To the cuckoo that fluttered above,  
And she settled soft.

It seemed that I and the morning world  
Were pressed cup-shape to take this reiver  
Bird who was weary to have furred  
Her wings on us,  
As we were weary to receive her:

This bird, this rich  
Sumptuous central grain,  
This mutable witch,  
This one refrain,  
This laugh in the fight,  
This clot of light,  
This core of night.

She spoke, and I closed my eyes  
To shut hallucinations out.  
I echoed with surprise  
Hearing my mere lips shout  
The answer they did devise.

Again, I saw a brown bird hover  
Over the flowers at my feet;  
I felt a brown bird hover  
Over my heart, and sweet  
Its shadow lay on my heart.  
I thought I saw on the clover  
A brown bee pulling apart  
The closed flesh of the clover  
And burrowing into its heart.

She moved her hand, and again

I felt the brown bird hover  
Over my heart . . . and then  
The bird came down on my heart,  
As on a nest the rover  
Cuckoo comes, and shoves over  
The brim each careful part  
Of love, takes possession and settles down,  
With her wings and her feathers does drown  
The nest in a heat of love.

She turned her flushed face to me for the glint  
Of a moment. 'See,' she laughed, 'if you also  
Can make them yawn.' I put my hand to the dint  
In the flower's throat, and the flower gaped wide with woe.  
She watched, she went of a sudden intensely still,  
She watched my hand, and I let her watch her fill.

I pressed the wretched, throttled flower between  
My fingers, till its head lay back, its fangs  
Poised at her: like a weapon my hand stood white and keen,  
And I held the choked flower-serpent in its pangs  
Of mordant anguish till she ceased to laugh,  
Until her pride's flag, smitten, cleaved down to the staff.

She hid her face, she murmured between her lips  
The low word 'Don't!' I let the flower fall,  
But held my hand afloat still towards the slips  
Of blossom she fingered, and my crisp fingers all  
Put forth to her: she did not move, nor I,  
For my hand like a snake watched hers that could not fly.  
Then I laughed in the dark of my heart, I did exult  
Like a sudden chuckling of music: I bade her eyes  
Meet mine, I opened her helpless eyes to consult  
Their fear, their shame, their joy that underlies  
Defeat in such a battle: in the dark of her eyes  
My heart was fierce to make her laughter rise . . .  
Till her dark deeps shook with convulsive thrills, and the dark  
Of her spirit wavered like water thrilled with light,  
And my heart leaped up in longing to plunge its stark  
Fervour within the pool of her twilight:  
Within her spacious gloom, in the mystery  
Of her barbarous soul, to grope with ecstasy.

And I do not care though the large hands of revenge  
Shall get my throat at last -- shall get it soon,  
If the joy that they are lifted to avenge  
Have risen red on my night as a harvest moon,  
Which even Death can only put out for me,  
And death I know is better than not-to-be.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Sorrow

Why does the thin grey strand  
Floating up from the forgotten  
Cigarette between my fingers,  
Why does it trouble me?

Ah, you will understand;  
When I carried my mother downstairs,  
A few times only, at the beginning  
Of her soft-foot malady,

I should find, for a reprimand  
To my gaiety, a few long grey hairs  
On the breast of my coat; and one by one  
I let them float up the dark chimney.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Study

Somewhere the long mellow note of the blackbird  
Quickens the unclasping hands of hazel,  
Somewhere the wind-flowers fling their heads back,  
Stirred by an impetuous wind. Some ways'll  
All be sweet with white and blue violet.  
(Hush now, hush. Where am I?—Biuret—)

On the green wood's edge a shy girl hovers  
From out of the hazel-screen on to the grass,  
Where wheeling and screaming the petulant plovers  
Wave frightened. Who comes? A labourer, alas!  
Oh the sunset swims in her eyes' swift pool.  
(Work, work, you fool—!)

Somewhere the lamp hanging low from the ceiling  
Lights the soft hair of a girl as she reads,  
And the red firelight steadily wheeling  
Weaves the hard hands of my friend in sleep.  
And the white dog snuffs the warmth, appealing  
For the man to heed lest the girl shall weep.  
(Tears and dreams for them; for me  
Bitter science—the exams are near.  
I wish I bore it more patiently.  
I wish you did not wait, my dear,  
For me to come: since work I must:  
Though it's all the same when we are dead.—  
I wish I was only a bust,  
All head.)

David Herbert Lawrence

# Submergence

When along the pavement,  
Palpitating flames of life,  
People flicker round me,  
I forget my bereavement,  
The gap in the great constellation,  
The place where a star used to be.

Nay, though the pole-star  
Is blown out like a candle,  
And all the heavens are wandering in disarray,  
Yet when pleiads of people are  
Deployed around me, and I see  
The street's long outstretched Milky Way,

When people flicker down the pavement,  
I forget my bereavement.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Tease

I will give you all my keys,  
You shall be my châtelaine,  
You shall enter as you please,  
As you please shall go again.

When I hear you jingling through  
All the chambers of my soul,  
How I sit and laugh at you  
In your vain housekeeping rôle.

Jealous of the smallest cover,  
Angry at the simplest door;  
Well, you anxious, inquisitive lover,  
Are you pleased with what's in store?

You have fingered all my treasures,  
Have you not, most curiously,  
Handled all my tools and measures  
And masculine machinery?

Over every single beauty  
You have had your little rapture;  
You have slain, as was your duty,  
Every sin-mouse you could capture.

Still you are not satisfied,  
Still you tremble faint reproach;  
Challenge me I keep aside  
Secrets that you may not broach.

Maybe yes, and maybe no,  
Maybe there are secret places,  
Altars barbarous below,  
Elsewhere halls of high disgraces.

Maybe yes, and maybe no,  
You may have it as you please,  
Since I choose to keep you so,  
Suppliant on your curious knees.



David Herbert Lawrence

# The American eagle

THE dove of Liberty sat on an egg  
And hatched another eagle.

But didn't disown the bird.

\_Down with all eagles\_! cooed the Dove.  
And down all eagles began to flutter, reeling from their  
perches:  
Eagles with two heads, eagles with one, presently eagles  
with none  
Fell from the hooks and were dead.

Till the American Eagle was the only eagle left in the world.

Then it began to fidget, shifting from one leg to the other,  
Trying to look like a pelican,  
And plucking out of his plumage a few loose feathers to  
feather the nests of all  
The new naked little republics come into the world.

But the feathers were, comparatively, a mere flea-bite.  
And the bub-eagle that Liberty had hatched was growing a  
startling big bird  
On the roof of the world;  
A bit awkward, and with a funny squawk in his voice,  
His mother Liberty trying always to teach him to coo  
And him always ending with a yawp  
\_Coo! Coo! Coo! Coo-ark! Coo-ark! Quark!! Quark\_!!  
YAWP!!!

So he clears his throat, the young Cock-eagle!

Now if the lilies of France lick Solomon in all his glory;  
And the leopard cannot change his spots;  
Nor the British lion his appetite;  
Neither can a young Cock-eagle sit simpering  
With an olive-sprig in his mouth.

It's not his nature.

The big bird of the Amerindian being the eagle,  
Red Men still stick themselves over with bits of his fluff,  
And feel absolutely IT.

So better make up your mind, American Eagle,  
Whether you're a sucking dove, \_Roo—coo- ooo! Quark!  
Yawp\_!!  
Or a pelican  
Handing out a few loose golden breast-feathers, at moulting  
time;  
Or a sort of prosperity-gander  
Fathering endless ten-dollar golden eggs.

Or whether it actually is an eagle you are,  
With a Roman nose  
And claws not made to shake hands with,  
And a Me-Almighty eye.

The new Proud Republic  
Based on the mystery of pride.  
Overweening men, full of power of life, commanding a  
teeming obedience.

Eagle of the Rockies, bird of men that are masters,  
Lifting the rabbit-blood of the myriads up into something  
splendid,  
Leaving a few bones;  
Opening great wings in the face of the sheep-faced ewe  
Who is losing her lamb,  
Drinking a little blood, and loosing another royalty unto the  
world.

Is that you, American Eagle?

Or are you the goose that lays the golden egg?  
Which is just a stone to anyone asking for meat.  
And are you going to go on for ever  
Laying that golden egg,  
That addled golden egg?



# The Bride

My love looks like a girl to-night,  
    But she is old.  
The plaits that lie along her pillow  
    Are not gold,  
But threaded with filigree silver,  
    And uncanny cold.

She looks like a young maiden, since her brow  
    Is smooth and fair,  
Her cheeks are very smooth, her eyes are closed.  
    She sleeps a rare  
Still winsome sleep, so still, and so composed.

Nay, but she sleeps like a bride, and dreams her dreams  
    Of perfect things.  
She lies at last, the darling, in the shape of her dream,  
    And her dead mouth sings  
By its shape, like the thrushes in clear evenings.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Deepest Sensuality

The profoundest of all sensualities  
is the sense of truth  
and the next deepest sensual experience  
is the sense of justice.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Elephant Is Slow To Mate

The elephant, the huge old beast,  
is slow to mate;  
he finds a female, they show no haste  
they wait

for the sympathy in their vast shy hearts  
slowly, slowly to rouse  
as they loiter along the river-beds  
and drink and browse

and dash in panic through the brake  
of forest with the herd,  
and sleep in massive silence, and wake  
together, without a word.

So slowly the great hot elephant hearts  
grow full of desire,  
and the great beasts mate in secret at last,  
hiding their fire.

Oldest they are and the wisest of beasts  
so they know at last  
how to wait for the loneliest of feasts  
for the full repast.

They do not snatch, they do not tear;  
their massive blood  
moves as the moon-tides, near, more near  
till they touch in flood.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The End

If I could have put you in my heart,  
If but I could have wrapped you in myself,  
How glad I should have been!  
And now the chart  
Of memory unrolls again to me  
The course of our journey here, before we had to part.

And oh, that you had never, never been  
Some of your selves, my love, that some  
Of your several faces I had never seen!  
And still they come before me, and they go,  
And I cry aloud in the moments that intervene.

And oh, my love, as I rock for you to-night,  
And have not any longer any hope  
To heal the suffering, or make requite  
For all your life of asking and despair,  
I own that some of me is dead to-night.

David Herbert Lawrence



# The English are So Nice!

The English are so nice  
so awfully nice  
they are the nicest people in the world.

And what's more, they're very nice about being nice  
about your being nice as well!  
If you're not nice they soon make you feel it.

Americans and French and Germans and so on  
they're all very well  
but they're not really nice, you know.  
They're not nice in our sense of the word, are they now?

That's why one doesn't have to take them seriously.  
We must be nice to them, of course,  
of course, naturally.  
But it doesn't really matter what you say to them,  
they don't really understand  
you can just say anything to them:  
be nice, you know, just nice  
but you must never take them seriously, they wouldn't understand,  
just be nice, you know! Oh, fairly nice,  
not too nice of course, they take advantage  
but nice enough, just nice enough  
to let them feel they're not quite as nice as they might be.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Enkindled Spring

This spring as it comes bursts up in bonfires green,  
Wild puffing of emerald trees, and flame-filled bushes,  
Thorn-blossom lifting in wreaths of smoke between  
Where the wood fumes up and the watery, flickering rushes.

I am amazed at this spring, this conflagration  
Of green fires lit on the soil of the earth, this blaze  
Of growing, and sparks that puff in wild gyration,  
Faces of people streaming across my gaze.

And I, what fountain of fire am I among  
This leaping combustion of spring? My spirit is tossed  
About like a shadow buffeted in the throng  
Of flames, a shadow that's gone astray, and is lost.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Gods! The Gods!

People were bathing and posturing themselves on the beach,  
and all was dreary, great robot limbs, robot breasts,  
robot voices, robot even the gay umbrellas.

But a woman, shy and alone, was washing herself under a tap and the glimmer  
of the presence of the gods was like  
lilies, and like water-lilies.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Hands Of The Betrothed

Her tawny eyes are onyx of thoughtlessness,  
Hardened they are like gems in ancient modesty;  
Yea, and her mouth's prudent and crude caress  
Means even less than her many words to me.

Though her kiss betrays me also this, this only  
Consolation, that in her lips her blood at climax clips  
Two wild, dumb paws in anguish on the lonely  
Fruit of my heart, ere down, rebuked, it slips.

I know from her hardened lips that still her heart is  
Hungry for me, yet if I put my hand in her breast  
She puts me away, like a saleswoman whose mart is  
Endangered by the pilferer on his quest.

But her hands are still the woman, the large, strong hands  
Heavier than mine, yet like leverets caught in steel  
When I hold them; my still soul understands  
Their dumb confession of what her sort must feel.

For never her hands come nigh me but they lift  
Like heavy birds from the morning stubble, to settle  
Upon me like sleeping birds, like birds that shift  
Uneasily in their sleep, disturbing my mettle.

How caressingly she lays her hand on my knee,  
How strangely she tries to disown it, as it sinks  
In my flesh and bone and forages into me,  
How it stirs like a subtle stoat, whatever she thinks!

And often I see her clench her fingers tight  
And thrust her fists suppressed in the folds of her skirt;  
And sometimes, how she grasps her arms with her bright  
Big hands, as if surely her arms did hurt.

And I have seen her stand all unaware  
Pressing her spread hands over her breasts, as she  
Would crush their mounds on her heart, to kill in there  
The pain that is her simple ache for me.

Her strong hands take my part, the part of a man  
To her; she crushes them into her bosom deep  
Where I should lie, and with her own strong span  
Closes her arms, that should fold me in sleep.

Ah, and she puts her hands upon the wall,  
Presses them there, and kisses her bright hands,  
Then lets her black hair loose, the darkness fall  
About her from her maiden-folded bands.

And sits in her own dark night of her bitter hair  
Dreaming—God knows of what, for to me she's the same  
Betrothed young lady who loves me, and takes care  
Of her womanly virtue and of my good name.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Inheritance

Since you did depart  
Out of my reach, my darling,  
Into the hidden,  
I see each shadow start  
With recognition, and I  
Am wonder-ridden.

I am dazed with the farewell,  
But I scarcely feel your loss.  
You left me a gift  
Of tongues, so the shadows tell  
Me things, and silences toss  
Me their drift.

You sent me a cloven fire  
Out of death, and it burns in the draught  
Of the breathing hosts,  
Kindles the darkening pyre  
For the sorrowful, till strange brands waft  
Like candid ghosts.

Form after form, in the streets  
Waves like a ghost along,  
Kindled to me;  
The star above the house-top greets  
Me every eve with a long  
Song fierily.

All day long, the town  
Glimmers with subtle ghosts  
Going up and down  
In a common, prison-like dress;  
But their daunted looking flickers  
To me, and I answer, Yes!

So I am not lonely nor sad  
Although bereaved of you,  
My little love.  
I move among a kinsfolk clad

With words, but the dream shows through  
As they move.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Mosquito

When did you start your tricks  
Monsieur?

What do you stand on such high legs for?  
Why this length of shredded shank  
You exaltation?

Is it so that you shall lift your centre of gravity upwards  
And weigh no more than air as you alight upon me,  
Stand upon me weightless, you phantom?

I heard a woman call you the Winged Victory  
In sluggish Venice.  
You turn your head towards your tail, and smile.

How can you put so much devilry  
Into that translucent phantom shred  
Of a frail corpus?

Queer, with your thin wings and your streaming legs  
How you sail like a heron, or a dull clot of air,  
A nothingness.

Yet what an aura surrounds you;  
Your evil little aura, prowling, and casting a numbness on my mind.

That is your trick, your bit of filthy magic:  
Invisibility, and the anæsthetic power  
To deaden my attention in your direction.

But I know your game now, streaky sorcerer.

Queer, how you stalk and prowl the air  
In circles and evasions, enveloping me,  
Ghoul on wings  
Winged Victory.

Settle, and stand on long thin shanks  
Eyeing me sideways, and cunningly conscious that I am aware,



You speck.

I hate the way you lurch off sideways into air  
Having read my thoughts against you.

Come then, let us play at unawares,  
And see who wins in this sly game of bluff.  
Man or mosquito.

You don't know that I exist, and I don't know that you exist.  
Now then!

It is your trump  
It is your hateful little trump  
You pointed fiend,  
Which shakes my sudden blood to hatred of you:  
It is your small, high, hateful bugle in my ear.

Why do you do it?  
Surely it is bad policy.

They say you can't help it.

If that is so, then I believe a little in Providence protecting the innocent.  
But it sounds so amazingly like a slogan  
A yell of triumph as you snatch my scalp.

Blood, red blood  
Super-magical  
Forbidden liquor.

I behold you stand  
For a second enspasmed in oblivion,  
Obscenely ecstasied  
Sucking live blood  
My blood.

Such silence, such suspended transport,  
Such gorging,  
Such obscenity of trespass.

You stagger

As well as you may.  
Only your accursed hairy frailty  
Your own imponderable weightlessness  
Saves you, wafts you away on the very draught my anger makes in its snatching.

Away with a pæan of derision  
You winged blood-drop.  
Can I not overtake you?  
Are you one too many for me  
Winged Victory?  
Am I not mosquito enough to out-mosquito you?

Queer, what a big stain my sucked blood makes  
Beside the infinitesimal faint smear of you!  
Queer, what a dim dark smudge you have disappeared into!

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Mystic Blue

Out of the darkness, fretted sometimes in its sleeping,  
Jets of sparks in fountains of blue come leaping  
To sight, revealing a secret, numberless secrets keeping.

Sometimes the darkness trapped within a wheel  
Runs into speed like a dream, the blue of the steel  
Showing the rocking darkness now a-reel.

And out of the invisible, streams of bright blue drops  
Rain from the showery heavens, and bright blue crops  
Surge from the under-dark to their ladder-tops.

And all the manifold blue and joyous eyes,  
The rainbow arching over in the skies,  
New sparks of wonder opening in surprise.

All these pure things come foam and spray of the sea  
Of Darkness abundant, which shaken mysteriously,  
Breaks into dazzle of living, as dolphins that leap from the sea  
Of midnight shake it to fire, so the secret of death we see.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Prophet

Ah, my darling, when over the purple horizon shall loom  
The shrouded mother of a new idea, men hide their faces,  
Cry out and fend her off, as she seeks her procreant groom,  
Wounding themselves against her, denying her fecund embraces.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Punisher

I have fetched the tears up out of the little wells,  
Scooped them up with small, iron words,  
Dripping over the runnels.

The harsh, cold wind of my words drove on, and still  
I watched the tears on the guilty cheek of the boys  
Glitter and spill.

Cringing Pity, and Love, white-handed, came  
Hovering about the Judgment which stood in my eyes,  
Whirling a flame.

. . . . .

The tears are dry, and the cheeks' young fruits are fresh  
With laughter, and clear the exonerated eyes, since pain  
Beat through the flesh.

The Angel of Judgment has departed again to the Nearness.  
Desolate I am as a church whose lights are put out.  
And night enters in dreariness.

The fire rose up in the bush and blazed apace,  
The thorn-leaves crackled and twisted and sweated in anguish;  
Then God left the place.

Like a flower that the frost has hugged and let go, my head  
Is heavy, and my heart beats slowly, laboriously,  
My strength is shed.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Revolutionary

Look at them standing there in authority  
The pale-faces,  
As if it could have any effect any more.

Pale-face authority,  
Caryatids,  
Pillars of white bronze standing rigid, lest the skies fall.

What a job they've got to keep it up.  
Their poor, idealist foreheads naked capitals  
To the entablature of clouded heaven.

When the skies are going to fall, fall they will  
In a great chute and rush of débâcle downwards.

Oh and I wish the high and super-gothic heavens would come down now,  
The heavens above, that we yearn to and aspire to.

I do not yearn, nor aspire, for I am a blind Samson.  
And what is daylight to me that I should look skyward?  
Only I grope among you, pale-faces, caryatids, as among a forest of pillars that  
hold up the dome of high ideal heaven  
Which is my prison,  
And all these human pillars of loftiness, going stiff, metallic-stunned with the  
weight of their responsibility  
I stumble against them.  
Stumbling-blocks, painful ones.

To keep on holding up this ideal civilisation  
Must be excruciating: unless you stiffen into metal, when it is easier to stand  
stock rigid than to move.

This is why I tug at them, individually, with my arm round their waist  
The human pillars.  
They are not stronger than I am, blind Samson.  
The house sways.

I shall be so glad when it comes down.  
I am so tired of the limitations of their Infinite.

I am so sick of the pretensions of the Spirit.  
I am so weary of pale-face importance.

Am I not blind, at the round-turning mill?  
Then why should I fear their pale faces?  
Or love the effulgence of their holy light,  
The sun of their righteousness?

To me, all faces are dark,  
All lips are dusky and valved.

Save your lips, O pale-faces,  
Which are slips of metal,  
Like slits in an automatic-machine, you columns of give-and-take.

To me, the earth rolls ponderously, superbly  
Coming my way without forethought or afterthought.  
To me, men's footfalls fall with a dull, soft rumble, ominous and lovely,  
Coming my way.

But not your foot-falls, pale-faces,  
They are a clicketing of bits of disjointed metal  
Working in motion.

To me, men are palpable, invisible nearnesses in the dark  
Sending out magnetic vibrations of warning, pitch-dark throbs of invitation.

But you, pale-faces,  
You are painful, harsh-surfaced pillars that give off nothing except rigidity,  
And I jut against you if I try to move, for you are everywhere, and I am blind,  
Sightless among all your visuality,  
You staring caryatids.

See if I don't bring you down, and all your high opinion  
And all your ponderous roofed-in erection of right and wrong  
Your particular heavens,  
With a smash.

See if your skies aren't falling!  
And my head, at least, is thick enough to stand it, the smash.

See if I don't move under a dark and nude, vast heaven

When your world is in ruins, under your fallen skies.  
Caryatids, pale-faces.  
See if I am not Lord of the dark and moving hosts  
Before I die.

David Herbert Lawrence



# The Ship Of Death

I

Now it is autumn and the falling fruit  
and the long journey towards oblivion.

The apples falling like great drops of dew  
to bruise themselves an exit from themselves.

And it is time to go, to bid farewell  
to one's own self, and find an exit  
from the fallen self.

II

Have you built your ship of death, O have you?  
O build your ship of death, for you will need it.

The grim frost is at hand, when the apples will fall  
thick, almost thundrous, on the hardened earth.

And death is on the air like a smell of ashes!  
Ah! can't you smell it?  
And in the bruised body, the frightened soul  
finds itself shrinking, wincing from the cold  
that blows upon it through the orifices.

III

And can a man his own quietus make  
with a bare bodkin?

With daggers, bodkins, bullets, man can make  
a bruise or break of exit for his life;  
but is that a quietus, O tell me, is it quietus?

Surely not so! for how could murder, even self-murder  
ever a quietus make?

IV

O let us talk of quiet that we know,  
that we can know, the deep and lovely quiet  
of a strong heart at peace!

How can we this, our own quietus, make?

V

Build then the ship of death, for you must take  
the longest journey, to oblivion.

And die the death, the long and painful death  
that lies between the old self and the new.

Already our bodies are fallen, bruised, badly bruised,  
already our souls are oozing through the exit  
of the cruel bruise.

Already the dark and endless ocean of the end  
is washing in through the breaches of our wounds,  
Already the flood is upon us.

Oh build your ship of death, your little ark  
and furnish it with food, with little cakes, and wine  
for the dark flight down oblivion.

VI

Piecemeal the body dies, and the timid soul  
has her footing washed away, as the dark flood rises.

We are dying, we are dying, we are all of us dying  
and nothing will stay the death-flood rising within us  
and soon it will rise on the world, on the outside world.

We are dying, we are dying, piecemeal our bodies are dying  
and our strength leaves us,  
and our soul cowers naked in the dark rain over the flood,  
cowering in the last branches of the tree of our life.

VII

We are dying, we are dying, so all we can do  
is now to be willing to die, and to build the ship  
of death to carry the soul on the longest journey.

A little ship, with oars and food  
and little dishes, and all accoutrements  
fitting and ready for the departing soul.

Now launch the small ship, now as the body dies  
and life departs, launch out, the fragile soul  
in the fragile ship of courage, the ark of faith  
with its store of food and little cooking pans  
and change of clothes,  
upon the flood's black waste  
upon the waters of the end  
upon the sea of death, where still we sail  
darkly, for we cannot steer, and have no port.

There is no port, there is nowhere to go  
only the deepening blackness darkening still  
blacker upon the soundless, ungurgling flood  
darkness at one with darkness, up and down  
and sideways utterly dark, so there is no direction any more  
and the little ship is there; yet she is gone.  
She is not seen, for there is nothing to see her by.  
She is gone! gone! and yet  
somewhere she is there.  
Nowhere!

## VIII

And everything is gone, the body is gone  
completely under, gone, entirely gone.  
The upper darkness is heavy as the lower,  
between them the little ship  
is gone

It is the end, it is oblivion.

## IX

And yet out of eternity a thread  
separates itself on the blackness,  
a horizontal thread  
that fumes a little with pallor upon the dark.

Is it illusion? or does the pallor fume  
A little higher?  
Ah wait, wait, for there's the dawn  
the cruel dawn of coming back to life  
out of oblivion

Wait, wait, the little ship  
drifting, beneath the deathly ashy grey  
of a flood-dawn.

Wait, wait! even so, a flush of yellow  
and strangely, O chilled wan soul, a flush of rose.

A flush of rose, and the whole thing starts again.

X

The flood subsides, and the body, like a worn sea-shell  
emerges strange and lovely.  
And the little ship wings home, faltering and lapsing  
on the pink flood,  
and the frail soul steps out, into the house again  
filling the heart with peace.

Swings the heart renewed with peace  
even of oblivion.

Oh build your ship of death. Oh build it!  
for you will need it.  
For the voyage of oblivion awaits you.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Song Of A Man Who Has Come Through

Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!  
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time.  
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!  
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!  
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed  
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course though the chaos of the world  
Like a fine, and exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted;  
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge  
Diven by invisible split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall find the  
Hesperides.

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,  
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,  
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

What is the knocking?  
What is the knocking at the door in the night?  
It's somebody wants to do us harm.

No, no, it is the three strange angels.  
Admit them, admit them.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The Virgin Mother

My little love, my darling,  
You were a doorway to me;  
You let me out of the confines  
Into this strange countrie,  
Where people are crowded like thistles,  
Yet are shapely and comely to see.

My little love, my dearest  
Twice have you issued me,  
Once from your womb, sweet mother,  
Once from myself, to be  
Free of all hearts, my darling,  
Of each heart's home-life free.

And so, my love, my mother,  
I shall always be true to you;  
Twice I am born, my dearest,  
To life, and to death, in you;  
And this is the life hereafter  
Wherein I am true.

I kiss you good-bye, my darling,  
Our ways are different now;  
You are a seed in the night-time,  
I am a man, to plough  
The difficult glebe of the future  
For God to endow.

I kiss you good-bye, my dearest,  
It is finished between us here.  
Oh, if I were calm as you are,  
Sweet and still on your bier!  
O God, if I had not to leave you  
Alone, my dear!

Let the last word be uttered,  
Oh grant the farewell is said!  
Spare me the strength to leave you  
Now you are dead.

I must go, but my soul lies helpless  
Beside your bed.

David Herbert Lawrence

# The White Horse

The youth walks up to the white horse, to put its halter on  
and the horse looks at him in silence.

They are so silent, they are in another world.

David Herbert Lawrence



# The Wild Common

The quick sparks on the gorse bushes are leaping,  
Little jets of sunlight-texture imitating flame;  
Above them, exultant, the peewits are sweeping:  
They are lords of the desolate wastes of sadness their screamings proclaim.

Rabbits, handfuls of brown earth, lie  
Low-rounded on the mournful grass they have bitten down to the quick.  
Are they asleep? -- Are they alive? -- Now see, when I  
Move my arms the hill bursts and heaves under their spurting kick.

The common flaunts bravely; but below, from the rushes  
Crowds of glittering king-cups surge to challenge the blossoming bushes;  
There the lazy streamlet pushes  
Its curious course mildly; here it wakes again, leaps, laughs, and gushes.

Into a deep pond, an old sheep-dip,  
Dark, overgrown with willows, cool, with the brook ebbing through so slow,  
Naked on the steep, soft lip  
Of the bank I stand watching my own white shadow quivering to and fro.

What if the gorse flowers shrivelled and kissing were lost?  
Without the pulsing waters, where were the marigolds and the songs of the  
brook!  
If my veins and my breasts with love embossed  
Withered, my insolent soul would be gone like flowers that the hot wind took.

So my soul like a passionate woman turns,  
Filled with remorseful terror to the man she scorned, and her love  
For myself in my own eyes' laughter burns,  
Runs ecstatic over the pliant folds rippling down to my belly from the breast-  
lights above.

Over my sunlit skin the warm, clinging air,  
Rich with the songs of seven larks singing at once, goes kissing me glad.  
And the soul of the wind and my blood compare  
Their wandering happiness, and the wind, wasted in liberty, drifts on and is sad.

Oh but the water loves me and folds me,  
Plays with me, sways me, lifts me and sinks me as though it were living blood,

Blood of a heaving woman who holds me,  
Owning my supple body a rare glad thing, supremely good.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Thought

Thought, I love thought.

But not the juggling and twisting of already existent ideas

I despise that self-important game.

Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,

Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of consciousness,

Thought is gazing onto the face of life, and reading what can be read,

Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to conclusion.

Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,

Thought is a man in his wholeness, wholly attending.

David Herbert Lawrence

# To Women As Far As I'M Concerned

The feelings I don't have I don't have.

The feeling I don't have, I won't say I have.

The feelings you say you have, you don't have.

The feelings you would like us both to have, we neither of us have.

The feelings people ought to have, they never have.

If people say they've got feelings, you may be pretty sure they haven't got them.

So if you want either of us to feel anything at all

You'd better abandon all ideas of feelings altogether.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Tortoise Family Connections

On he goes, the little one,  
Bud of the universe,  
Pediment of life.  
Setting off somewhere, apparently.  
Whither away, brisk egg?

His mother deposited him on the soil as if he were no more than droppings,  
And now he scuffles tinily past her as if she were an old rusty tin.

A mere obstacle,  
He veers round the slow great mound of her --  
Tortoises always foresee obstacles.

It is no use my saying to him in an emotional voice:  
'This is your Mother, she laid you when you were an egg.'

He does not even trouble to answer: 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?'  
He wearily looks the other way,  
And she even more wearily looks another way still,  
Each with the utmost apathy,  
Incognisant,  
Unaware,  
Nothing.

As for papa,  
He snaps when I offer him his offspring,  
Just as he snaps when I poke a bit of stick at him,  
Because he is irascible this morning, an irascible tortoise  
Being touched with love, and devoid of fatherliness.

Father and mother,  
And three little brothers,  
And all rambling aimless, like little perambulating pebbles scattered in the  
garden,  
Not knowing each other from bits of earth or old tins.

Except that papa and mama are old acquaintances, of course,  
Though family feeling there is none, not even the beginnings.

Fatherless, motherless, brotherless, sisterless  
Little tortoise.

Row on then, small pebble,  
Over the clods of the autumn, wind-chilled sunshine,  
Young gaiety.

Does he look for a companion?

No, no, don't think it.  
He doesn't know he is alone;  
Isolation is his birthright,  
This atom.

To row forward, and reach himself tall on spiny toes,  
To travel, to burrow into a little loose earth, afraid of the night,  
To crop a little substance,  
To move, and to be quite sure that he is moving:  
Basta!  
To be a tortoise!  
Think of it, in a garden of inert clods  
A brisk, brindled little tortoise, all to himself --  
Adam!

In a garden of pebbles and insects  
To roam, and feel the slow heart beat  
Tortoise-wise, the first bell sounding  
From the warm blood, in the dark-creation morning.

Moving, and being himself,  
Slow, and unquestioned,  
And inordinately there, O stoic!  
Wandering in the slow triumph of his own existence,  
Ringing the soundless bell of his presence in chaos,  
And biting the frail grass arrogantly,  
Decidedly arrogantly.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Tortoise Gallantry

Making his advances  
He does not look at her, nor sniff at her,  
No, not even sniff at her, his nose is blank.  
Only he senses the vulnerable folds of skin  
That work beneath her while she sprawls along  
In her ungainly pace,  
Her folds of skin that work and row  
Beneath the earth-soiled hovel in which she moves.

And so he strains beneath her housey wall,  
And catches her trouser-legs in his beak  
Suddenly, or her skinny limb,  
And strange and grimly drags at her  
Like a dog,  
Only agelessly silent, with a reptile's awful persistency.

Grim, gruesome gallantry, to which he is doomed.  
Dragged out of an eternity of silent isolation  
And doomed to partiality, partial being,  
Ache, and want of being,  
Want,  
Self-exposure, hard humiliation, need to add himself on to her.

Born to walk alone,  
Fore-runner,  
Now suddenly distracted into this mazy side-track,  
This awkward, harrowing pursuit,  
This grim necessity from within.

Does she know  
As she moves eternally slowly away?  
Or is he driven against her with a bang, like a bird flying in the dark against a  
window,  
All knowledgeable?

The awful concussion,  
And the still more awful need to persist, to follow, follow, continue,

Driven, after aeons of pristine, fore-god-like singleness and oneness,

At the end of some mysterious, red-hot iron,  
Driven away from himself into her tracks,  
Forced to crash against her.

Stiff, gallant, irascible, crook-legged reptile,  
Little gentleman,  
Sorry plight,  
We ought to look the other way.

Save that, having come with you so far,  
We will go on to the end.

David Herbert Lawrence



# Tortoise Shell

The Cross, the Cross  
Goes deeper in than we know,  
Deeper into life;  
Right into the marrow  
And through the bone.  
Along the back of the baby tortoise  
The scales are locked in an arch like a bridge,  
Scale-lapping, like a lobster's sections  
Or a bee's.

Then crossways down his sides  
Tiger-stripes and wasp-bands.

Five, and five again, and five again,  
And round the edges twenty-five little ones,  
The sections of the baby tortoise shell.

Four, and a keystone;  
Four, and a keystone;  
Four, and a keystone;  
Then twenty-four, and a tiny little keystone.

It needed Pythagoras to see life playing with counters on the living back  
Of the baby tortoise;  
Life establishing the first eternal mathematical tablet,  
Not in stone, like the Judean Lord, or bronze, but in life-clouded, life-rosy tortoise  
shell.

The first little mathematical gentleman  
Stepping, wee mite, in his loose trousers  
Under all the eternal dome of mathematical law.

Fives, and tens,  
Threes and fours and twelves,  
All the volte face of decimals,  
The whirligig of dozens and the pinnacle of seven.

Turn him on his back,  
The kicking little beetle,

And there again, on his shell-tender, earth-touching belly,  
The long cleavage of division, upright of the eternal cross  
And on either side count five,  
On each side, two above, on each side, two below  
The dark bar horizontal.

The Cross!

It goes right through him, the sprottling insect,  
Through his cross-wise cloven psyche,  
Through his five-fold complex-nature.

So turn him over on his toes again;  
Four pin-point toes, and a problematical thumb-piece,  
Four rowing limbs, and one wedge-balancing head,  
Four and one makes five, which is the clue to all mathematics.

The Lord wrote it all down on the little slate  
Of the baby tortoise.  
Outward and visible indication of the plan within,  
The complex, manifold involvedness of an individual creature  
Plotted out  
On this small bird, this rudiment,  
This little dome, this pediment  
Of all creation,  
This slow one.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Tortoise Shout

I thought he was dumb,  
I said he was dumb,  
Yet I've heard him cry.

First faint scream,  
Out of life's unfathomable dawn,  
Far off, so far, like a madness, under the horizon's dawning rim,  
Far, far off, far scream.

Tortoise in extremis.

Why were we crucified into sex?  
Why were we not left rounded off, and finished in ourselves,  
As we began,  
As he certainly began, so perfectly alone?

A far, was-it-audible scream,  
Or did it sound on the plasm direct?

Worse than the cry of the new-born,  
A scream,  
A yell,  
A shout,  
A pæan,  
A death-agony,  
A birth-cry,  
A submission,  
All tiny, tiny, far away, reptile under the first dawn.

War-cry, triumph, acute-delight, death-scream reptilian,  
Why was the veil torn?  
The silken shriek of the soul's torn membrane?  
The male soul's membrane  
Torn with a shriek half music, half horror.

Crucifixion.  
Male tortoise, cleaving behind the hovel-wall of that dense female,  
Mounted and tense, spread-eagle, out-reaching out of the shell  
In tortoise-nakedness,

Long neck, and long vulnerable limbs extruded, spread-eagle over her house-  
roof,  
And the deep, secret, all-penetrating tail curved beneath her walls,  
Reaching and gripping tense, more reaching anguish in uttermost tension  
Till suddenly, in the spasm of coition, tugging like a jerking leap, and oh!  
Opening its clenched face from his outstretched neck  
And giving that fragile yell, that scream,  
Super-audible,  
From his pink, cleft, old-man's mouth,  
Giving up the ghost,  
Or screaming in Pentecost, receiving the ghost.

His scream, and his moment's subsidence,  
The moment of eternal silence,  
Yet unreleased, and after the moment, the sudden, startling jerk of coition, and  
at once  
The inexpressible faint yell --  
And so on, till the last plasm of my body was melted back  
To the primeval rudiments of life, and the secret.

So he tugs, and screams  
Time after time that frail, torn scream  
After each jerk, the longish interval,  
The tortoise eternity,  
Agelong, reptilian persistence,  
Heart-throb, slow heart-throb, persistent for the next spasm.

I remember, when I was a boy,  
I heard the scream of a frog, which was caught with his foot in the mouth of an  
up-starting snake;  
I remember when I first heard bull-frogs break into sound in the spring;  
I remember hearing a wild goose out of the throat of night  
Cry loudly, beyond the lake of waters;  
I remember the first time, out of a bush in the darkness, a nightingale's piercing  
cries and gurgles startled the depths of my soul;  
I remember the scream of a rabbit as I went through a wood at midnight;  
I remember the heifer in her heat, blorting and blorting through the hours,  
persistent and irrepressible;  
I remember my first terror hearing the howl of weird, amorous cats;  
I remember the scream of a terrified, injured horse, the sheet-lightning  
And running away from the sound of a woman in labor, something like an owl  
whooping,

And listening inwardly to the first bleat of a lamb,  
The first wail of an infant,  
And my mother singing to herself,  
And the first tenor singing of the passionate throat of a young collier, who has  
long since drunk himself to death,  
The first elements of foreign speech  
On wild dark lips.

And more than all these,  
And less than all these,  
This last,  
Strange, faint coition yell  
Of the male tortoise at extremity,  
Tiny from under the very edge of the farthest far-off horizon of life.

The cross,  
The wheel on which our silence first is broken,  
Sex, which breaks up our integrity, our single inviolability, our deep silence  
Tearing a cry from us.

Sex, which breaks us into voice, sets us calling across the deeps, calling, calling  
for the complement,  
Singing, and calling, and singing again, being answered, having found.

Torn, to become whole again, after long seeking for what is lost,  
The same cry from the tortoise as from Christ, the Osiris-cry of abandonment,  
That which is whole, torn asunder,  
That which is in part, finding its whole again throughout the universe.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Trees In The Garden

Ah in the thunder air  
how still the trees are!

And the lime-tree, lovely and tall, every leaf silent  
hardly loses even a last breath of perfume.

And the ghostly, creamy coloured little tree of leaves  
white, ivory white among the rambling greens  
how evanescent, variegated elder, she hesitates on the green grass  
as if, in another moment, she would disappear  
with all her grace of foam!

And the larch that is only a column, it goes up too tall to see:  
and the balsam-pines that are blue with the grey-blue blueness of  
things from the sea,  
and the young copper beech, its leaves red-rosy at the ends  
how still they are together, they stand so still  
in the thunder air, all strangers to one another  
as the green grass glows upwards, strangers in the silent garden.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Troth With The Dead

The moon is broken in twain, and half a moon  
Before me lies on the still, pale floor of the sky;  
The other half of the broken coin of troth  
Is buried away in the dark, where the still dead lie.  
They buried her half in the grave when they laid her away;  
I had pushed it gently in among the thick of her hair  
Where it gathered towards the plait, on that very last day;  
And like a moon in secret it is shining there.

My half shines in the sky, for a general sign  
Of the troth with the dead I pledged myself to keep;  
Turning its broken edge to the dark, it shines indeed  
Like the sign of a lover who turns to the dark of sleep.  
Against my heart the inviolate sleep breaks still  
In darkened waves whose breaking echoes o'er  
The wondering world of my wakeful day, till I'm lost  
In the midst of the places I knew so well before.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Trust

Oh we've got to trust  
one another again  
in some essentials.

Not the narrow little  
bargaining trust  
that says: I'm for you  
if you'll be for me. -

But a bigger trust,  
a trust of the sun  
that does not bother  
about moth and rust,  
and we see it shining  
in one another.

Oh don't you trust me,  
don't burden me  
with your life and affairs; don't  
thrust me  
into your cares.

But I think you may trust  
the sun in me  
that glows with just  
as much glow as you see  
in me, and no more.

But if it warms  
your heart's quick core  
why then trust it, it forms  
one faithfulness more.

And be, oh be  
a sun to me,  
not a weary, insistent  
personality

but a sun that shines



and goes dark, but shines  
again and entwines  
with the sunshine in me

till we both of us  
are more glorious  
and more sunny.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Turkey-Cock

You ruffled black blossom,  
You glossy dark wind.

Your sort of gorgeousness,  
Dark and lustrous  
And skinny repulsive  
And poppy-glossy,  
Is the gorgeousness that evokes my most puzzled admiration.

Your aboriginality  
Deep, unexplained,  
Like a Red Indian darkly unfinished and aloof,  
Seems like the black and glossy seeds of countless centuries.

Your wattles are the colour of steel-slag which has been red-hot  
And is going cold,  
Cooling to a powdery, pale-oxydised sky-blue.

Why do you have wattles, and a naked, wattled head?  
Why do you arch your naked-set eye with a more-than-comprehensible  
arrogance?

The vulture is bald, so is the condor, obscenely,  
But only you have thrown this amazing mantilla of oxydised sky-blue  
And hot red over you.

This queer dross shawl of blue and vermilion,  
Whereas the peacock has a diadem.

I wonder why.  
Perhaps it is a sort of uncanny decoration, a veil of loose skin.  
Perhaps it is your assertion, in all this ostentation, of raw contradictoriness.  
Your wattles drip down like a shawl to your breast  
And the point of your mantilla drops across your nose, unpleasantly.

Or perhaps it is something unfinished  
A bit of slag still adhering, after your firing in the furnace of creation.

Or perhaps there is something in your wattles of a bull's dew-lap

Which slips down like a pendulum to balance the throbbing mass of a generous breast,

The over-drip of a great passion hanging in the balance.

Only yours would be a raw, unsmelted passion, that will not quite fuse from the dross.

You contract yourself,

You arch yourself as an archer's bow

Which quivers indrawn as you clench your spine

Until your veiled head almost touches backward

To the root-rising of your erected tail.

And one intense and backward-curving frisson

Seizes you as you clench yourself together

Like some fierce magnet bringing its poles together.

Burning, pale positive pole of your wattled head!

And from the darkness of that opposite one

The upstart of your round-barred, sun-round tail!

Whilst between the two, along the tense arch of your back

Blows the magnetic current in fierce blasts,

Ruffling black, shining feathers like lifted mail,

Shuddering storm wind, or a water rushing through.

Your brittle, super-sensual arrogance

Tosses the crape of red across your brow and down your breast

As you draw yourself upon yourself in insistence.

It is a declaration of such tension in will

As time has not dared to avouch, nor eternity been able to unbend

Do what it may.

A raw American will, that has never been tempered by life;

You brittle, will-tense bird with a foolish eye.

The peacock lifts his rods of bronze

And struts blue-brilliant out of the far East.

But watch a turkey prancing low on earth

Drumming his vaulted wings, as savages drum

Their rhythms on long-drawn, hollow, sinister drums.

The ponderous, sombre sound of the great drum of Huichilobos

In pyramid Mexico, during sacrifice.

Drum, and the turkey onrush  
Sudden, demonic dauntlessness, full abreast,  
All the bronze gloss of all his myriad petals  
Each one apart and instant.  
Delicate frail crescent of the gentle outline of white  
At each feather-tip  
So delicate;  
Yet the bronze wind-well suddenly clashing  
And the eye over-weening into madness.

Turkey-cock, turkey-cock  
Are you the bird of the next dawn?

Has the peacock had his day, does he call in vain, screecher, for the sun to rise?  
The eagle, the dove, and the barnyard rooster, do they call in vain, trying to  
wake the morrow?  
And do you await us, wattled father, Westward?  
Will your yell do it?

Take up the trail of the vanished American  
Where it disappeared at the foot of the crucifix.  
Take up the primordial Indian obstinacy,  
The more than human, dense insistence of will,  
And disdain, and blankness, and onrush, and prise open the new day with them?

The East a dead letter, and Europe moribund. . . . Is that so?  
And those sombre, dead, feather-lustrous Aztecs, Amerindians,  
In all the sinister splendour of their red blood sacrifices,  
Do they stand under the dawn, half-godly, half-demon, awaiting the cry of the  
turkey-cock?

Or must you go through the fire once more, till you're smelted pure,  
Slag-wattled turkey-cock,  
Dross-jabot?

Fiesole.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Virgin Youth

Now and again  
All my body springs alive,  
And the life that is polarised in my eyes,  
That quivers between my eyes and mouth,  
Flies like a wild thing across my body,  
Leaving my eyes half-empty, and clamorous,  
Filling my still breasts with a flush and a flame,  
Gathering the soft ripples below my breast  
Into urgent, passionate waves,  
And my soft, slumbering belly  
Quivering awake with one impulse of desire,  
Gathers itself fiercely together;  
And my docile, fluent arms  
Knotting themselves with wild strength  
To clasp—what they have never clasped.  
Then I tremble, and go trembling  
Under the wild, strange tyranny of my body,  
Till it has spent itself,  
And the relentless nodality of my eyes reasserts itself,  
Till the bursten flood of life ebbs back to my eyes,  
Back from my beautiful, lonely body  
Tired and unsatisfied.

David Herbert Lawrence

# We Are Transmitters

As we live, we are transmitters of life.  
And when we fail to transmit life, life fails to flow through us.

That is part of the mystery of sex, it is a flow onwards.  
Sexless people transmit nothing.

And if, as we work, we can transmit life into our work,  
life, still more life, rushes into us to compensate, to be ready  
and we ripple with life through the days.

Even if it is a woman making an apple dumpling, or a man a stool,  
if life goes into the pudding, good is the pudding  
good is the stool,  
content is the woman, with fresh life rippling in to her,  
content is the man.

Give, and it shall be given unto you  
is still the truth about life.  
But giving life is not so easy.  
It doesn't mean handing it out to some mean fool, or letting the living dead eat  
you up.  
It means kindling the life-quality where it was not,  
even if it's only in the whiteness of a washed pocket-handkerchief.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Week-Night Service

The five old bells  
Are hurrying and eagerly calling,  
Imploring, protesting  
They know, but clamorously falling  
Into gabbling incoherence, never resting,  
Like spattering showers from a bursten sky-rocket dropping  
In splashes of sound, endlessly, never stopping.

The silver moon  
That somebody has spun so high  
To settle the question, yes or no, has caught  
In the net of the night's balloon,  
And sits with a smooth bland smile up there in the sky  
Smiling at naught,  
Unless the winking star that keeps her company  
Makes little jests at the bells' insanity,  
As if he knew aught!

The patient Night  
Sits indifferent, hugged in her rags,  
She neither knows nor cares  
Why the old church sobs and brags;  
The light distresses her eyes, and tears  
Her old blue cloak, as she crouches and covers her face,  
Smiling, perhaps, if we knew it, at the bells' loud clattering disgrace.

The wise old trees  
Drop their leaves with a faint, sharp hiss of contempt,  
While a car at the end of the street goes by with a laugh;  
As by degrees  
The poor bells cease, and the Night is exempt,  
And the stars can chaff  
The ironic moon at their ease, while the dim old church  
Is peopled with shadows and sounds and ghosts that lurch  
In its cenotaph.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Whales Weep Not!

They say the sea is cold, but the sea contains  
the hottest blood of all, and the wildest, the most urgent.

All the whales in the wider deeps, hot are they, as they urge  
on and on, and dive beneath the icebergs.  
The right whales, the sperm-whales, the hammer-heads, the killers  
there they blow, there they blow, hot wild white breath out of the sea!

And they rock, and they rock, through the sensual ageless ages  
on the depths of the seven seas,  
and through the salt they reel with drunk delight  
and in the tropics tremble they with love  
and roll with massive, strong desire, like gods.  
Then the great bull lies up against his bride  
in the blue deep of the sea

as mountain pressing on mountain, in the zest of life:  
and out of the inward roaring of the inner red ocean of whale blood  
the long tip reaches strong, intense, like the maelstrom-tip, and comes to rest  
in the clasp and the soft, wild clutch of a she-whale's fathomless body.

And over the bridge of the whale's strong phallus, linking the wonder of whales  
the burning archangels under the sea keep passing, back and forth,  
keep passing archangels of bliss  
from him to her, from her to him, great Cherubim  
that wait on whales in mid-ocean, suspended in the waves of the sea  
great heaven of whales in the waters, old hierarchies.  
And enormous mother whales lie dreaming suckling their whale-tender young  
and dreaming with strange whale eyes wide open in the waters of the beginning  
and the end.

And bull-whales gather their women and whale-calves in a ring  
when danger threatens, on the surface of the ceaseless flood  
and range themselves like great fierce Seraphim facing the threat  
encircling their huddled monsters of love.  
and all this happiness in the sea, in the salt  
where God is also love, but without words:  
and Aphrodite is the wife of whales  
most happy, happy she!



and Venus among the fishes skips and is a she-dolphin  
she is the gay, delighted porpoise sporting with love and the sea  
she is the female tunny-fish, round and happy among the males  
and dense with happy blood, dark rainbow bliss in the sea.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Willy Wet-Leg

I can't stand Willy Wet-Leg,  
Can't stand him at any price.  
He's resigned, and when you hit him  
he lets you hit him twice.

David Herbert Lawrence

# Worm Either Way

If you live along with all the other people  
and are just like them, and conform, and are nice  
you're just a worm --

and if you live with all the other people  
and you don't like them and won't be like them and won't conform  
then you're just the worm that has turned,  
in either case, a worm.

The conforming worm stays just inside the skin  
respectably unseen, and cheerfully gnaws away at the heart of life,  
making it all rotten inside.

The unconforming worm -- that is, the worm that has turned --  
gnaws just the same, gnawing the substance out of life,  
but he insists on gnawing a little hole in the social epidermis  
and poking his head out and waving himself  
and saying: Look at me, I am not respectable,  
I do all the things the bourgeois daren't do,  
I booze and fornicate and use foul language and despise your honest man.--

But why should the worm that has turned protest so much?  
The bonnie bonnie bourgeois goes a-whoring up back streets just the same.  
The busy busy bourgeois imbibes his little share  
just the same  
if not more.

The pretty pretty bourgeois pinks his language just as pink  
if not pinker,  
and in private boasts his exploits even louder, if you ask me,  
than the other.  
While as to honesty, Oh look where the money lies!

So I can't see where the worm that has turned puts anything over  
the worm that is too cunning to turn.  
On the contrary, he merely gives himself away.  
The turned worm shouts. I bravely booze!  
the other says. Have one with me!  
The turned worm boasts: I copulate!  
the unturned says: You look it.

You're a d----- b----- b----- p----- bb-----, says the worm that's turned.  
Quite! says the other. Cuckoo!

David Herbert Lawrence