

ROSSETTI, Christina
 **In the bleak mid-winter**

 In the bleak mid-winter

 Frosty wind made moan

 Earth stood hard as iron,

 Water like a stone;

 Snow had fallen, snow on snow,

 Snow on snow,

 In the bleak mid-winter

 Long ago.

 Our God, heaven cannot hold Him

 Nor earth sustain,

 Heaven and earth shall flee away

 When He comes to reign:

 In the bleak mid-winter

 A stable-place sufficed

 The Lord God Almighty —

 Jesus Christ.

 Enough for Him, whom cherubim

 Worship night and day,

 A breastful of milk

 And a mangerful of hay;

 Enough for Him, whom Angels

 Fall down before,

 The ox and ass and camel

 Which adore.

 Angels and Archangels

 May have gathered there,

 Cherubim and seraphim

 Thronged the air;

 But only His Mother

 In her maiden bliss

 Worshipped the Beloved

 With a kiss.
What can I give Him,

Poor as I am? —

If I were a Shepherd

I would bring a lamb;

If I were a Wise Man

I would do my part, —

Yet what I can I give Him, —

Give my heart.
 **Who Shall Deliver Me?**

God strengthen me to bear myself;

That heaviest weight of all to bear,

Inalienable weight of care.

All others are outside myself;

I lock my door and bar them out,

The turmoil, tedium, gad-about.

I lock my door upon myself,

And bar them out; but who shall wall

Self from myself, most loathed of all?

If I could once lay down myself,

And start self-purged upon the race

That all must run! Death runs apace.

If I could set aside myself,

And start with lightened heart upon

The road by all men overgone!

God harden me against myself,

This coward with pathetic voice

Who craves for ease, and rest, and joys:

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;

My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,

My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,

Can roll the strangling load from me,

Break off the yoke and set me free.
 **The Poor Ghost**"Oh whence do you come, my dear friend, to me,

 With your golden hair all fallen below your knee,

 And your face as white as snowdrops on the lea,

 And your voice as hollow as the hollow sea?"

"From the other world I come back to you,

 My locks are uncurled with dripping drenching dew.

 You know the old, whilst I know the new:

 But tomorrow you shall know this too."

"Oh not tomorrow into the dark, I pray;

 Oh not tomorrow, too soon to go away:

 Here I feel warm and well-content and gay:

 Give me another year, another day."

"Am I so changed in a day and a night

 That mine own only love shrinks from me with fright,

 Is fain to turn away to left or right

 And cover up his eyes from the sight?"

"Indeed I loved you, my chosen friend,

 I loved you for life, but life has an end;

 Thro' sickness I was ready to tend:

 But death mars all, which we cannot mend.

"Indeed I loved you; I love you yet

 If you will stay where your bed is set,

 Where I have planted a violet

 Which the wind waves, which the dew makes wet."

"Life is gone, then love too is gone,

 It was a reed that I leant upon:

 Never doubt 1 will leave you alone

 And not wake you rattling bone with bone.

"I go home alone to my bed,

 Dug deep at the foot and deep at the head,

 Roofed in with a load of lead,

 Warm enough for the forgotten dead.

"But why did your tears soak thro' the clay,

 And why did your sobs wake me where I lay?

 I was away, far enough away:

 Let me sleep now till the Judgment Day."

**When I am dead, my dearest**When I am dead, my dearest,

   Sing no sad songs for me;

 Plant thou no roses at my head,

   Nor shady cypress tree:

 Be the green grass above me

   With showers and dewdrops wet;

 And if thou wilt, remember,

   And if thou wilt, forget.

 I shall not see the shadows,

   I shall not feel the rain;

 I shall not hear the nightingale

   Sing on, as if in pain:

 And dreaming through the twilight

   That doth not rise nor set,

 Haply I may remember,

   And haply may forget.

**Remember**Remember me when I am gone away,

   Gone far away into the silent land;

   When you can no more hold me by the hand,

Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day

   You tell me of our future that you planned:

   Only remember me; you understand

It will be late to counsel then or pray.

Yet if you should forget me for a while

   And afterwards remember, do not grieve:

   For if the darkness and corruption leave

   A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,

Better by far you should forget and smile

   Than that you should remember and be sad.

**A Birthday**My heart is like a singing bird

Whose nest is in a watered shoot;

My heart is like an apple-tree

Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;

My heart is like a rainbow shell

That paddles in a halcyon sea;

My heart is gladder than all these

Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;

Hang it with vair and purple dyes;

Carve it in doves and pomegranates,

And peacocks with a hundred eyes;

Work it in gold and silver grapes,

In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;

Because the birthday of my life

Is come, my love is come to me.

**Dream land**Where sunless rivers weep

Their waves into the deep,

She sleeps a charmed sleep:

Awake her not.

Led by a single star,

She came from very far

To seek where shadows are

Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,

She left the fields of corn,

For twilight cold and lorn

And water springs.

Through sleep, as through a veil,

She sees the sky look pale,

And hears the nightingale

That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest

Shed over brow and breast;

Her face is toward the west,

The purple land.

She cannot see the grain

Ripening on hill and plain;

She cannot feel the rain

Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore

Upon a mossy shore;

Rest, rest at the heart's core

Till time shall cease:

Sleep that no pain shall wake;

Night that no morn shall break

Till joy shall overtake

Her perfect peace.

**In an Artist's studio**
One face looks out from all his canvases,

One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:

We found her hidden just behind those screens,

That mirror gave back all her loveliness.

A queen in opal or in ruby dress,

A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,

A saint, an angel — every canvas means

The same one meaning, neither more or less.

He feeds upon her face by day and night,

And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,

Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:

Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;

Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;

Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

**Cobwebs**
It is a land with neither night nor day,

Nor heat nor cold, nor any wind, nor rain,

Nor hills nor valleys; but one even plain

Stretches thro' long unbroken miles away:

While thro' the sluggish air a twilight grey

Broodeth; no moons or seasons wax and wane,

No ebb and flow are there among the main,

No bud-time no leaf-falling there for aye,

No ripple on the sea, no shifting sand,

No beat of wings to stir the stagnant space,

And loveless sea: no trace of days before,

No guarded home, no time-worn restingplace

No future hope no fear forevermore.

**In the bleak midwinter**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,

Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;

Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,

In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;

Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.

In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed

The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,

Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,

The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,

Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;

But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,

Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;

Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

**Echo**
Come to me in the silence of the night;

Come in the speaking silence of a dream;

Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright

As sunlight on a stream;

Come back in tears,

O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,

Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,

Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;

Where thirsting longing eyes

Watch the slow door

That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live

My very life again though cold in death:

Come back to me in dreams, that I may give

Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:

Speak low, lean low

As long ago, my love, how long ago.

**The Prince’s Progress**
Too late for love, too late for joy,

 Too late, too late!

 You loitered on the road too long,

 You trifled at the gate:

 The enchanted dove upon her branch

 Died without a mate;

 The enchanted princess in her tower

 Slept, died, behind the grate;

 Her heart was starving all this while

 You made it wait.

 “Ten years ago, five years ago,

 One year ago,

 Even then you had arrived in time,

 Though somewhat slow;

 Then you had known her living face

 Which now you cannot know:

 The frozen fountain would have leaped,

 The buds gone on to blow,

 The warm south wind would have awaked

 To melt the snow.

 “Is she fair now as she lies?

 Once she was fair;

 Meet queen for any kingly king,

 With gold-dust on her hair.

 Now these are poppies in her locks,

 White poppies she must wear;

 Must wear a veil to shroud her face

 And the want graven there;

 Or is the hunger fed at length,

 Cast off the care?

 “We never saw her with a smile

 Or with a frown;

 Her bed seemed never soft to her,

 Though tossed of down;

 She little heeded what she wore,

 Kirtle, or wreath, or gown;

 We think her white brows often ached

 Beneath her crown,

 Till silvery hairs showed in her locks

 That used to be so brown.

 “We never heard her speak in haste:

 Her tones were sweet,

 And modulated just so much

 As it was meet,

 Her heart sat silent through the noise

 And concourse of the street.

 There was no hurry in her hands,

 No hurry in her feet,

 There was no bliss drew nigh to her,

 That she might run to greet.

 “You should have wept her yesterday,

 Wasting upon her bed:

 But wherefore should you weep to-day

 That she is dead?

 Lo, we who love weep not to-day,

 But crown her royal head.

 Let be these poppies that we strew,

 Your roses are too red:

 Let be these poppies, not for you

 Cut down and spread.”

**Goblin Market**

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In a smart, ache, tingle,

Lizzie went her way;

Knew not was it night or day;

Sprang up the bank, tore thro’ the furze,

Threaded copse and dingle,

And heard her penny jingle

Bouncing in her purse,—

Its bounce was music to her ear.

She ran and ran

As if she fear’d some goblin man

Dogg’d her with gibe or curse

Or something worse:

But not one goblin scurried after,

Nor was she prick’d by fear;

The kind heart made her windy-paced

That urged her home quite out of breath with haste

And inward laughter.

She cried, “Laura,” up the garden,

“Did you miss me?

Come and kiss me.

Never mind my bruises,

Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices

Squeez’d from goblin fruits for you,

Goblin pulp and goblin dew.

Eat me, drink me, love me;

Laura, make much of me;

For your sake I have braved the glen

And had to do with goblin merchant men.”

Laura started from her chair,

Flung her arms up in the air,

Clutch’d her hair:

“Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted

For my sake the fruit forbidden?

Must your light like mine be hidden,

Your young life like mine be wasted,

Undone in mine undoing,

And ruin’d in my ruin,

Thirsty, canker’d, goblin-ridden?”—

She clung about her sister,

Kiss’d and kiss’d and kiss’d her:

Tears once again

Refresh’d her shrunken eyes,

Dropping like rain

After long sultry drouth;

Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,

She kiss’d and kiss’d her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,

That juice was wormwood to her tongue,

She loath’d the feast:

Writhing as one possess’d she leap’d and sung,

Rent all her robe, and wrung

Her hands in lamentable haste,

And beat her breast.

Her locks stream’d like the torch

Borne by a racer at full speed,

Or like the mane of horses in their flight,

Or like an eagle when she stems the light

Straight toward the sun,

Or like a caged thing freed,

Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knock’d at her heart,

Met the fire smouldering there

And overbore its lesser flame;

She gorged on bitterness without a name:

Ah! fool, to choose such part

Of soul-consuming care!

Sense fail’d in the mortal strife:

Like the watch-tower of a town

Which an earthquake shatters down,

Like a lightning-stricken mast,

Like a wind-uprooted tree

Spun about,

Like a foam-topp’d waterspout

Cast down headlong in the sea,

She fell at last;

Pleasure past and anguish past,

Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.

That night long Lizzie watch’d by her,

Counted her pulse’s flagging stir,

Felt for her breath,

Held water to her lips, and cool’d her face

With tears and fanning leaves:

But when the first birds chirp’d about their eaves,

And early reapers plodded to the place

Of golden sheaves,

And dew-wet grass

Bow’d in the morning winds so brisk to pass,

And new buds with new day

Open’d of cup-like lilies on the stream,

Laura awoke as from a dream,

Laugh’d in the innocent old way,

Hugg’d Lizzie but not twice or thrice;

Her gleaming locks show’d not one thread of grey,

Her breath was sweet as May

And light danced in her eyes.

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