

À Chloris

Théophile de Viau (1590–1626), translation: Richard Stokes

If it be true, Chloris, that you love me,
(And I'm told you love me dearly),
I do not believe that even kings
Can match the happiness I know.
Even death would be powerless

To alter my fortune
With the promise of heavenly bliss!
All that they say of ambrosia
Does not stir my imagination
Like the favour of your eyes

selections from *Études latines*

Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894), translation: Richard Stokes

3. *Salinum*

Care, lighter than the winds of Epirus,
Shall pursue on the sea the brazen hulls;
Sweet is the present hour: let us smile away
Tomorrow's bitterness.

Purple dye has reddened twice your fine wool;
Your Sicilian flock is huge; and I have better:
The Muses of Greece and their sacred lessons
And the heritage of ancestors.

5. *Lydé*

Come! The day is god-like. Let us drink liberally
Of Caecuban wine from the cellar.
Proud Lyde, allow domestic pleasure
To diminish a little your modesty.

I shall sing of the briny deep, the Nereids'
Green tresses; you, Lyde,
On your lyre that nestles in your arms,
Shall sing of Diana the Huntress.

Time passes, the horizon reddens the sun,
Make haste. The amphora, filled
When Bibulus was consul, rests in its tomb:
Disturb its ancient slumber.

Then we shall invoke Venus and her swan-drawn
Chariot with golden reins,
The Cyclades, Paphos, and your shores, O Gnidus!
And hymn the starry sky.

10. *Phyllis*

For nine years and more in the sealed amphora
My Alban Hills wine has been slowly maturing;
We must garland with acanthus and flowering
myrtle, O Phyllis, your unfastened locks.

O Phyllis, it is the day of Venus, and I love you!
Listen! Telephus burns and sighs for another;
He forgets you, and I love you, and our finest days
Shall return in our final night.

Anise burns on the altar, and all hasten along,
Crowned with godly verbena;
And my humble abode sparkles with joy
At the reflection of silver goblets.

It is you who shall blossom in the fair days left me:
I shall change no more, the ripe season is here.
Sing! Poetry is sweet when uttered by you,
O fair conclusion of my loves!

Joy

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

I went to look for Joy,
Slim, dancing Joy,
Gay, laughing Joy,
Bright-eyed Joy –
And I found her

Driving the butcher's cart
In the arms of the butcher boy!
Such company, such company,
As keeps this young nymph, Joy!

selections from *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

1. *Nature, the Gentlest Mother*

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,—
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,—
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

8. *When They Come Back*

When they come back if Blossoms do
I always feel a doubt
If Blossoms can be born again
When once the Art is out

When they begin, if Robins may,
I always had a fear
I did not tell, it was their last Experiment
Last Year,

I Am in Doubt

Florence Hynes Willeté (1901–1982)

I'll love you until stars fall.
Can it be so sure, so lasting as my heart demands
of one whose slightest touch upon my hands
is like the wind inside an aspen tree?
I am in doubt of this frail thing

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

When it is May, if May return,
Had nobody a pang
Lest in a Face so beautiful
He might not look again?

If I am there,
One does not know
What Party one may be
Tomorrow, but if I am there
I take back all I say

I hold so sworn to constancy
And this is why, why,
Too often I have watched a burnt blue sky
Where slipping stars spilled scarlet
and grew cold.

Love Let the Wind Cry ... How I Adore Thee

Sappho (c. 630–c. 570 BC), translation: H. T. Wharton

Love let the wind cry
On the dark mountain,
Bending the ash trees
And the tall hemlocks
With the great voice of
Thunderous legions,
How I adore thee.

Let the hoarse torrent
In the blue canyon,
Murmuring mightily
Out of the gray mist
Of primal chaos
Cease not proclaiming
How I adore thee.

Let the long rhythm
Of crunching rollers,
Breaking and bursting
On the white seaboard

Titan and tireless,
Tell, while the world stands,
How I adore thee.

Love, let the clear call
Of the tree cricket,
Frailest of creatures,
Green as the young grass,
Mark with his trilling
Resonant bell-note,
How I adore thee.

But, more than all sounds,
Surer, serener,
Fuller of passion
And exultation,
Let the hushed whisper
In thine own heart say,
How I adore thee.

Sure On This Shining Night

James Agee (1909–1955)

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

The Daisies

James Stephens (1882–1950)

In the scented bud of the morning O,
When the windy grass went rippling far!
I saw my dear one walking slow
In the field where the daisies are.

We did not laugh, and we did not speak,
As we wandered happ'ly, to and fro,
I kissed my dear on either cheek,
In the bud of the morning O!

A lark sang up, from the breezy land;
A lark sang down, from a cloud afar;
As she and I went, hand in hand,
In the field where the daisies are.

Fleurs

Louise de Vilmorin (1902–1969), translation: Richard Stokes

Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms,
Flowers from a step's parentheses,
Who brought you these flowers in winter
Sprinkled with the sea's sand?

Sand of your kisses, flowers of faded loves
Your lovely eyes are ashes and in the hearth
A moan-beribboned heart
Burns with its sacred images.

Nuvoletta

James Joyce (1882–1941)

Nuvoletta in her lightdress,
spunn of sisteen shimmers,
was looking down on them,
leaning over the bannistars
and listening all she childishly could. . . .

She was alone.

All her nubied companions
were asleeping with the squirrels. . . .
She tried all the winsome wonsome ways
the four winds had taught her.

She tossed her sfumastelliacinous hair
like la princesse de la Petite Bretagne
and she rounded her mignons arms
like Mrs. Cornwallis-West
and she smiled over herself
like the image of a pose of a daughter
of the Emerour of Irelande
and she sighed after herself
as were she born to bride with Tristus
Tristior Tristissimus.

But, sweet madonine, she might fair as well
have carried her daisy's worth to Florida. . . .

Oh, how it was duusk!
From Vallee Maraia to Grasyaplainia,
dormimust echo!
A dew! Ah dew! It was so duusk
that the tears of night beagn to fall,
first by ones and twos,
then by threes and fours,
at last by fives and sixes of sevens,
for the tired ones were wecking,
as we weep now with them.
O! O! O! Par la pluie! . . .

Then Nuvoletta reflected for the last time
in her little long life
And she made up all her myriads
of drifting minds in one.
She cancelled all her engauzements.
She climbed over the bannistars;
she gave a chily cloudy cry:
Nuée! Nuée!
A lightdress fluttered
She was gone.

June

Nora Hopper (1871–1906)

Dark red roses in a honeyed wind swinging,
Silk-soft hollyhock, coloured like the moon;
Larks high overhead lost in light, and singing;
That's the way of June.

Dark red roses in the warm wind falling,
Velvet leaf by velvet leaf, all the breathless noon;
Far off sea waves calling, calling, calling;
That's the way of June.

Love's Philosophy

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)

The fountains mingle with the River
And the Rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.
Why not I with thine?

Sweet as scarlet strawberry under wet leaves hidden,
Honey'd as the damask rose, lavish as the moon,
Shedding lovely light on things forgotten, hope
forbidden,
That's the way of June.

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me?

Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes

Ben Jonson (1572–1637)

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And send'st it back to me:
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear
Not of itself, but thee.

selections from **Moments in Sonder**

Maya Angelou (1928–2014)

2. A Conceit

Give me your hand
Make room for me
to lead and follow
you
beyond this rage of poetry.

Let others have
the privacy of
touching words
and love of loss
of love.

For me
Give me your hand.

Duermente, Niño Lindo

Traditional / Folk

Translation: Wayland Rogers

Sleep, my beautiful child
In the arms of love
While the pangs of my sorrow
Are soothed and put to rest.

You need not fear King Herod.
He will bring you no harm.
In the arms of your mother
Nothing may give offense.

5. In a Time

In a time of secret wooing
today prepares tomorrow's ruin
left knows not what right is doing
my heart is torn asunder.

In a time of furtive sighs
sweet hellos and sad goodbyes
half-truths told and entire lies
my conscience echoes thunder.

In a time when kingdoms come
joy is brief as summer's fun
happiness its race has run
then pain stalks in to plunder.