

A single redcoat turns his head,  
He turns and looks at me.

My man, from sky to sky's so far,  
We never crossed before;  
Such leagues apart the world's ends are,  
We're like to meet no more.

What thoughts at heart have you and I  
We cannot stop to tell;  
But dead or living, drunk or dry,  
Soldier, I wish you well.

[30] *Epilogue*  
*A Shropshire Lad, LVII*

You smile upon your friend today,  
Today his ills are over;  
You hearken to the lover's say,  
And happy is the lover.

'Tis late to hearken, late to smile  
But better late than never;  
I shall have lived a little while  
Before I die for ever.

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This recording was made with the financial assistance of The Limoges Trust, The Ivor Gurney Society, The Elmley Foundation, The John Ireland Charitable Trust and the Finzi Friends.

Websites:

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[www.ivor.gurney.net](http://www.ivor.gurney.net)   [www.geraldfinzi.org](http://www.geraldfinzi.org)



# LOVE'S VOICE

NATHAN VALE TENOR  
PAUL PLUMMER PIANO

NEW HORIZONS



*Songs by*  
*Gurney, Ireland,*  
*Finzi & Venables*

## LOVE'S VOICE

Songs by Ivor Gurney, John Ireland,  
Gerald Finzi & Ian Venables

**Nathan Vale**, Tenor  
**Paul Plummer**, Piano

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### Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| [1] On Wenlock Edge ( <i>A.E. Housman</i> ) *        | 2:56 |
| [2] Bread and cherries ( <i>Walter de la Mare</i> )  | 0:53 |
| [3] Down by the salley gardens ( <i>W.B. Yeats</i> ) | 2:43 |

### John Ireland (1879-1962)

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| [4] Friendship in misfortune ( <i>anon.</i> ) | 1:48 |
| [5] The three ravens (arr.) ( <i>anon.</i> )  | 3:30 |
| [6] The trellis ( <i>Aldous Huxley</i> )      | 3:24 |

### Ian Venables (b. 1955)

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| <b>Love's Voice</b> – A song cycle, Op. 22 ( <i>John Addington Symonds</i> ) |      |
| [7] Fortunate isles  | 3:02 |
| [8] The passing stranger   | 3:29 |
| [9] The invitation to the gondola  | 4:18 |
| [10] Love's voice  | 4:54 |

### Ivor Gurney

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| [11] Ha'nacker Mill ( <i>Hilaire Belloc</i> ) | 2:09 |
| [12] Snow ( <i>Edward Thomas</i> )            | 2:39 |
| [13] Hawk and Buckle ( <i>Robert Graves</i> ) | 1:10 |

\* premiere recording

### Gerald Finzi (1901-56)

#### Oh Fair to see, Op.13b

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| [14] I say 'I'll seek her side' ( <i>Thomas Hardy</i> ) | 2:52 |
| [15] Of fair to see ( <i>Christina Rossetti</i> )       | 1:35 |
| [16] As I lay in the early sun ( <i>Edward Shanks</i> ) | 1:46 |
| [17] Only the wanderer ( <i>Ivor Gurney</i> )           | 1:56 |
| [18] To Joy ( <i>Edmund Blunden</i> )                   | 3:48 |
| [19] Harvest ( <i>Edmund Blunden</i> )                  | 4:14 |
| [20] Since we loved ( <i>Robert Bridges</i> )           | 1:15 |

### Ian Venables

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| [21] Vitae summa brevis Op. 33 No. 3 ( <i>Ernest Dowson</i> )*   | 3:32 |
| [22] Flying crooked Op. 28 No. 1 ( <i>Robert Graves</i> )        | 1:08 |
| [23] At midnight Op. 28 No. 2 ( <i>Edna St. Vincent Millay</i> ) | 4:08 |
| [24] The hippo Op. 33 No. 6 ( <i>Theodore Roethke</i> )*         | 1:40 |

### John Ireland

#### The Land of Lost Content (*A.E. Housman*)

- |                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| [25] The Lent lily   | 2:51 |
| [26] Ladslove        | 2:22 |
| [27] Goal and wicket | 1:02 |
| [28] The vain desire | 2:29 |
| [29] The encounter   | 1:19 |
| [30] Epilogue        | 1:33 |

\* Premiere recordings

**Total duration: 76:39**

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'I cannot live with Beauty out of mind;  
I seek her and desire her all the day,  
Being the chiefest treasure many may find'

Ivor Gurney, *Winter Beauty*

Ivor Gurney's close friend, Marion Scott, wrote that, 'Amid all the tragedy of Gurney's life there is one consolation. He remained undefeated to the end in his love of Truth and Beauty, and his spiritual allegiance was unbroken. He had never lowered his banner to the world or to Mammon'.

Gurney was born in Gloucester in 1890, the son of a tailor, and received his early musical training as a chorister. He studied the organ and had begun composing by 1904. Gloucester and its surrounding countryside became his home more than any building could be said to have done, and he spent days roaming the hills and Severn vale, alone or with friends, reading or talking about music and poetry. Even when he left to study at the Royal College of Music in 1911, to fight in the fields of Flanders from 1916-17, and latterly during his tragic incarceration in the City of London Mental Hospital, from 1922 until his death in 1937, his mind still roamed his beloved Gloucestershire.

It is barely conceivable that Gurney's allegiance to beauty and to seeing and telling 'the ultimate truth of things, and especially of primal things' – what Hilaire Belloc described as a 'sacramental occupation' – could coexist with the horrors of trench warfare. However, it was here that Gurney's second art, poetry, came to maturity, and a small number of songs were written – songs that are some of Gurney's finest. The last of these is an as yet unpublished setting of *On Wenlock Edge* from A.E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, composed 'in his head' near Arras in June 1917, but which he wasn't to put to paper until January 1918 whilst in hospital in Edinburgh, having been gassed and invalided home in September 1917. The poem is one with which Gurney would have felt an assured affinity, containing a sense of memory of place to which Gurney was particularly sensitive: 'Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I'.

Gurney's briefest song, a joyous setting of Walter de la Mare's *Bread and cherries* composed around 1921, is followed by a depiction of a tryst down by a garden of willow trees. This setting of Yeats' *Down by the salley gardens*, composed in September-October 1910, is unusual for Gurney in its squareness of phrase and, except for the repetition of the last line of each verse, the plainness of its strophic setting.

The childhood home of John Ireland (1879-1962), before he was orphaned at the age of fourteen, just after starting his studies at the Royal College of Music, was full of literature, his father being a publisher and his mother a writer. One of Ireland's earliest memories, from around the age of three, was of filling the American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson's top hat with daisies.

The beginning of John Ireland's mature career was marked by his becoming organist at the Gothic St. Luke's Church in Chelsea in July 1904 – a post he held for over twenty years, until 1926. In recollections by his choristers at St. Luke's, it is Ireland's improvisations at the piano, at casual moments, that seemed to have remained most firmly in their memory. When one listens to his solo piano works and song accompaniments one can almost hear Ireland, an accomplished pianist, relaxedly exploring his extraordinarily rich and individual harmonic language.

*Friendship in misfortune* is the second of a set of Three Songs which deal with the subject of friendship, in this case stating that although there have been troubles and 'every hope has flown', friendship still clings on.

*The Three ravens* – a ballad better known in its Scottish version, 'The Twa Corbies' – is John Ireland's only folksong arrangement, set in a much simpler style than his original songs. This is certainly true when compared with the rapturous setting of Aldous Huxley's *The trellis*, a poem written before Huxley acquired his reputation as an *enfant terrible* novelist. The song captures a moment of intimacy between two lovers, hidden from prying eyes behind a thick-flowered trellis. Between the first and second verses Ireland portrays the fulfilment of the moment with what has been identified by several commentators as Ireland's 'passion' motif.

In an age where society is so completely in the grip of the vices of commerce and mass media, where even music is regarded as an 'industry' and has by some been sacrificed upon Mammon's altar, it is perhaps difficult for those ideals uncompromisingly sought by Gurney to be maintained. There are, however, a number of artists who determinedly remain unswayed in their search for, and expression of Truth and Beauty. One such artist is Ian Venables, whose musical voice maintains the accession of English music from Hubert Parry, through Gurney and Ireland, to the present day.

Ian Venables was born in Liverpool in 1955. He studied composition at Trinity College of Music with Professor Richard Arnell, and after settling in Worcester continued his studies at the Birmingham Conservatoire with John Joubert, John Mayer and Andrew Downes. Venables has explored many

genres in his composition; however, like Ivor Gurney, it is in the fields of chamber music and art song that he has worked most extensively. Although there is much important work in his chamber music, warranting wider performance and recognition, it is the response to words, through song, in which Venables has found his genius.

Venables' 1995 song cycle, *Love's Voice*, to words by John Addington Symonds (1840-93) – a poet in whom Venables has found a symbiotic voice – is set in Venice. Perhaps ironically, for what is traditionally a city of romance, where, in the words of Aschenbach, 'passion confuses the senses', the cycle tells of unrequited love.

The opening song, *Fortunate isles*, seems to contradict John Donne's famous dictum, 'No man is an island'. The piano depicts the heaving oceans that divide one isle from another, while the singer expresses the seeming hopelessness of willing to love: it will happen to another, but not to me. This sense of isolation is perhaps subconsciously echoed in the opening motif in the vocal line, recalling the words from Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, 'If I forget thee'.

*Fortunate isles* sets the emotional landscape for the remainder of the cycle, dwelling on an encounter during one of Symonds' numerous visits to Venice. In *The passing stranger* the poet is haunted by the image of a figure who, in a 'fleeting glance' from a passing gondola, awoke the 'old sanctities of human love'. The next song, *Invitation to the gondola*, finds the poet longing for the gondola carrying that figure to come forth. The central section of the song betrays a sense of emptiness and distance, but that does not stop there being a glow of hope and excitement in the poet's reverie. In the final song, *Love's voice*, the poet tells that he dare not dream nor hope for love. It is only at the end of the cycle that Love's voice is finally heard, but only to admonish: it would have been better 'toward death to glide, Soul-full of bliss, Than with long life unsatisfied, Life's crown to miss.'

In 1913, the French born poet, essayist and socialist, Hilaire Belloc, was motoring near Slindon in his beloved Sussex, to where he had moved at the age of eight – just twelve miles away from where John Ireland was to make his own Sussex home late in his life. Revisiting sites from his youth, Belloc drove past the hill at Halnaker and was appalled to see that the mill at the top of the hill was in ruins, having been damaged by a storm in 1905. Belloc's poem, *Ha'nacker Mill*, set by Gurney in 1921, reflects not only on the desolation at Halnaker, but sees its decay as a symptom of the wider demise of English agriculture in a post-industrial world.

Ten years after Gurney's final breakdown and incarceration, Helen Thomas, widow of the poet Edward Thomas, visited Gurney in the mental hospital. Through her husband she and Gurney found a common ground. Helen took with her Edward's maps of Gloucestershire, through which Gurney relived well known footpaths, tracing them with his finger, with Thomas as his guide. Gurney had stopped writing music in 1927, but by this time had composed twenty settings of Thomas's verse. In his setting of *Snow* Gurney transports us to a peaceful, impressionistic landscape disturbed only by the steady falling of snow. In its midst is a child, the poet's young daughter, Myfanwy, crying because she believes the falling flakes to be the snowy down of a white bird that has been killed. Gurney's long melodic lines are supported by a delicately shifting accompaniment in which the constant flow of quavers is so subtly phrased as to often belie the constant time signature, creating a timeless backdrop to the song.

Gurney's setting of *Snow* was written in January 1921, a time Gurney was trying to settle on a pseudonym for the purposes of writing 'pot boilers', presumably in the hope that he could create a perhaps more commercially seductive side-line in the less serious, popular ballad market. By February he had adopted the name of Michael Flood for such songs, of which the lively setting of Robert Graves' *Hawk and Buckle* is an example. The marked contrast between these two contemporary songs perhaps bears out Gurney's desire for an alter-ego.

The set of songs *O fair to see*, compiled after Gerald Finzi's untimely death in September 1956, seems to bring together the most personal of connections in Finzi's life. The set was compiled from a number of completed songs left in Finzi's 'bottom drawer', awaiting the completion of others with which they could be gathered into a set.

In the first song, *I say, "I'll seek her side"*, we touch briefly upon a deep creative partnership. As seen already with Ian Venables and John Addington Symonds, occasionally a composer will find a poet with whom he feels a particular affinity. Such was the case with Hardy and Finzi, a relationship he described as a 'compulsive chosen identification'. Of the 160 song settings embarked upon by Finzi nearly half are settings of Hardy.

A pre-Housman evocation of the beauty of a cherry tree, in Christina Rossetti's *O Fair to see* is followed by a setting of Edward Shanks' *As I lay in the early sun*, in which Finzi appears to pay tribute to his first music teacher, Ernest Farrar. In October 1915 the Finzi family moved from London, where Gerald had been born in 1901, to Harrogate, in order to escape the aerial bombardment of

London. It was here that Finzi's studies with Farrar began, an association that was cut short when Farrar was killed in the last months of the Great War. The lilting, falling third figure which runs through *As I lay in the early sun* creates a languorous atmosphere similar to that instilled by the same figure used in the second of Farrar's *English Pastoral Impressions*, 'Bredon Hill'.

In later life Finzi made some attempts to preserve the memory of his teacher. This was a symptom of a wider interest in conservation, particularly seeking to preserve a number of apple varieties in his orchard as well as forgotten English music of the eighteenth century. An encounter with the music of Ivor Gurney whilst sitting in on a singing lesson given by Finzi's second music teacher, Edward Bairstow, began a 'lifelong crusade' that resulted in the publication of a number of Gurney's songs and, with the help of Edmund Blunden, a volume of Gurney's poetry.

In this set of songs Gurney is represented in a setting of a 'Song', *Only the wanderer*, from his first collection of poems, written in the trenches, *Severn and Somme*. Finzi had hoped to complete a set of songs to Blunden's own poems, in the event only completing two. In the first, the ironically titled *To Joy*, composed in 1931 before Finzi and Blunden had met, Finzi captures a touching humanity in the selfless 'Our tears fall, fall, fall – I would weep my blood away to make her warm'. The innocence and vulnerability of infancy is a subject that much attracted Finzi, as epitomised in *Dies Natalis*. In this case the poem was written by Blunden following the death of his first child, Joy, in 1919, aged just five weeks. In 'weeping my blood away', Blunden is perhaps recalling a blood transfusion he gave to the child in an attempt to save her life. Finzi considered the song to be one of his best songs, feeling that it 'evoked the Suffolk sky where the clouds herald the breath of the storm'.

Trevor Hold has observed that in *Harvest*, 'Blunden sees... a metaphor for his own life: a creative harvest that has not come to its hoped-for fruition.' Finzi composed the setting during the last year of his life and is a poignant casting in music of his thoughts following his diagnosis with Hodgkin's disease in 1951. As Finzi himself quoted in a postscript to his catalogue of works added after his diagnosis: 'My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun'.

*Since we loved*, the final song in the set, was the last work to be completed by Finzi. One cannot help seeing this last breath of creativity as a tribute to his wife, Joy, who had been the mainstay of his life and art since their marriage in 1933.

The next song, Venables' setting of Ernest Dowson's *Vitae summa brevis*, is an elegiac reverie rueing the brevity of life. Despite this seeming pessimism, Dowson's poem and Venables' response to it in music, epitomises an idea with which Finzi was obsessed: that, although human life is short, through music and poetry one is able to 'shake hands with a good friend over the centuries'.

Two songs in a lighter vein, *Flying crooked*, charting the rather haphazard flight-path of a cabbage white butterfly, and the whimsical *The hippo*, frame a setting of an untitled poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay, given the title *At midnight* by the composer. *At midnight*, with its emotionally charged, dream-like atmosphere, recalls passions past and dwells on current loneliness, feeling in her heart, 'a quiet pain for unremembered lads that not again will turn to me at midnight with a cry.'

This latter sentiment echoes one of the dominant themes in Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, a collection of poems in which love and a post-industrial pastoral nostalgia are infused with homoerotic undertones and expressions of disillusionment at the sacrifice of 'unremembered lads' who went to the Boer War, never to return. This found fresh currency during the First World War, ensuring the longevity of the volume's popularity.

When in 1917 Gurney was considering setting verses from *A Shropshire Lad*, initially resulting in *On Wenlock edge*, he observed that, 'Such precise and measured verses are too easy to set; do not give the scope that R. Bridges' songs offer one. One can only set them, say, a little better than Hermann Lohr or Maude Valerie White can.' Despite this warning that settings could so easily turn out to be no more than a drawing room ballad, Housman is one of the most frequently set poets in the English language. Of these numerous settings and cycles, John Ireland's *The Land of Lost Content*, with its fatalistic outlook, is considered to be one of the bleakest.

*The Land of Lost Content* was written between October 1920 and January 1921. According to one of Ireland's biographers, the cycle was intended for the distinguished tenor Gervase Elwes. However, Elwes was never to see the work; in the same month that Ireland completed the cycle, he was killed in a tragic accident whilst on tour in the United States.

The opening song of the cycle, *The Lent lily* (the only song with a title given by Housman; the rest were supplied by Ireland) heralds the coming of Spring: its bell-like accompaniment, redolent of both *The trellis* and the 1918 Harold Monro setting, *Earth's Call*, rings in the new season and awakens the voices of nature and love. However, despite this cause for optimism it is already tinged with the

acknowledgement of the temporary nature of life. The expression of love and infatuation in the second song, *Ladslove*, with its Narcissistic warning, is short lived. By the time we reach *Goal and wicket* the singer's love has been lost, and he is attempting to distract himself from his sorrow. The disarming chromaticism of *The vain desire*, portraying the pointlessness of the sacrifice, is followed by the yet more unsettling mixed modality of *The encounter*. Here we return to the passing glance of Venables' *Love's voice*, although this time there will be very little hope of meeting again, as the soldier marches to his proable end. In the final song Ireland introduces a version of his Passion motif after 'And happy is the lover'. However, this is not a moment of fulfilment but the memory of past love with one whose 'ills are over'.

Philip Lancaster, © 2006

**Nathan Vale** was born in Stourbridge and was a chorister at Hereford Cathedral. He currently studies with Ryland Davies at the Benjamin Britten Opera School where he is the Drapers De Turkheim Scholar. He is the winner of the 2006 London Handel Singing Competition, where he was also awarded the Audience Prize. He was also finalist in the Young Song Makers Almanac and winner of the 2005 AESS English Song Competition. Nathan is increasingly in demand as a recitalist and has performed at The Three Choirs Festival in Hereford, for the Housman, Gurney, Warlock and Ireland Societies, and also appeared in a recital alongside Dame Felicity Lott and pianist Graham Johnson.

Recent opera engagements include First Prisoner in Beethoven's *Fidelio* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Nerone in Monteverdi's *Poppea* for the Benjamin Britten Opera School and Nencio in Haydn's *La Infidelta Delusa* for Bampton Classical Opera. Oratorio performances include Bach's *Weinachts Oratorium* with Harry Christophers and Handel's *Messiah* in the Royal Albert Hall with Sir David Willcocks.

Nathan is very grateful to The Elmley Foundation for their continuing support.

**Paul Plummer** gained an MA at Oxford University and a GSMD piano accompaniment diploma. He has studied with Andrew Ball, Graham Johnson and Malcolm Martineau, among others. After further study at the Tanglewood Music Centre (US) he became an RCM Geoffrey Parsons Junior Fellow. He continues to study at the Britten-Pears Programme in Snape. Described in the press as "superb... with remarkably imaginative interpretations/great self-possession" (*Glasgow Herald Independent*), Paul

has performed in many broadcasts, recordings and recitals for major British festivals (including Presteigne Festival premières of song-cycles by John McCabe and Cecilia McDowall), and has also appeared at London's Wigmore Hall. Overseas he has performed in Montreal, Barbados and Istanbul with the vocal ensemble Cantabile, and coached in China for New York International Opera Partners.

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This recording was made with the financial assistance of The Limoges Trust, The Ivor Gurney Society, The Elmley Foundation, The John Ireland Charitable Trust and The Finzi Friends.

Cover: "Falls of the Cayne, near Dolgelly" (1841). Watercolour by Thomas Gambier Parry (1816-1888), courtesy of Mr. Tom Fenton.

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[1] *On Wenlock Edge*

A.E. Housman  
*A Shropshire Lad*, XXXI (1896)

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;  
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;  
The gate, it plies the saplings double,  
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger  
When Uricon the city stood:  
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,  
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman  
At yonder heaving hill would stare:  
The blood that warms an English yeoman,  
The thoughts that hurt him, they were  
there.

There, like the wind through the woods in riot,  
Through him the gale of life blew high;  
The tree of man was never quiet:  
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,  
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:  
To-day the Roman and his trouble  
Are ashes under Uricon.

[2] *Bread and cherries*

Walter de la Mare – *Peacock Pie* (1913)

'Cherries, ripe cherries!' The old woman cried,  
In her snowy white apron, and basket beside;  
And the little boys came,

Eyes shining, cheeks red,  
to buy bags of cherries  
To eat with their bread.

[3] *Down by the salley gardens*

W.B. Yeats – *Crossways* (1889)

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did  
meet;  
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-  
white feet.  
She bid me take life easy, as the leaves grow  
on the tree;  
But I, being young and foolish, with her would  
not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,  
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her  
snow-white hand.  
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grown  
on the weirs;  
But I was young and foolish, and now am full  
of tears.

[4] *Friendship in misfortune* – Anon.

Give me the depth of love that springs  
From friendship in misfortune grown,  
As ivy to the ruin clings  
When every other hope has flown.

Give me that fond confiding love  
That nought but death itself can blight;  
A flame that slander cannot move,  
But burns in darkness doubly bright.

[5] *The three ravens* – Anon.

There were three ravens sat on a tree,  
Down a down hey down hey down.  
They were as black as they might be,  
With a down.  
Then one of them said to his mate:  
"Where shall we our breakfast take?"  
With a down derry derry derry down down.

Down in yonder greenfield,  
Down a down hey down hey down.  
There lies a knight slain under his shield;  
With a down.  
His hounds they lie down at his feet,  
So well they can their master keep.  
With a down derry derry derry down down.

His hawks they fly so eagerly,  
Down a down hey down hey down.  
There is no fowl dare him come nigh  
With a down.  
But down there comes a fallow doe,  
As great with young as she might go.  
With a down derry derry derry down down.

She lifted up his bloody head,  
Down a down hey down hey down.  
And kissed his wounds that were so red.  
With a down.  
She got him up upon her back  
And carried him to earthen lake.  
With a down derry derry derry down down.

She buried him before the prime,  
Down a down hey down hey down.  
She was dead herself ere evensong time.

With a down.  
Now God send every gentleman  
Such hounds, such hawks and such a leman.  
With a down derry derry derry down down.

[6] *The trellis* – Aldous Huxley

Thick-flowered is the trellis  
That hides our joys  
From prying eyes of malice  
And all annoys  
And we lie rosily bowered.

Through the long afternoons  
And evenings endlessly  
Drawn out, when summer swoons  
In her perfume windlessly,  
Sounds our light laughter.

With whispered words between  
And silent kisses.  
None but the flowers have seen  
Our white caresses –  
Flowers and the bright-eyed birds.

*Love's Voice* – John Addington Symonds

[7] *Fortunate isles*

There are islands, there are islands  
On the ocean's heaving breast  
Where the honey-scented silence  
Broods above the halcyon's nest;

Where the sands are smooth and golden,  
And the flowers bloom, one by one,

Unbeloved and unbeholden  
Save by the all-seeing sun.

I shall ne'er with friend or lover  
Wander on from glade to glade  
Through those forests, or discover  
Silvery fountains in the shade:

But another's foot shall linger  
Mid the bowers whereof I dream,  
And perchance a careless finger  
Strew the roses on the stream;

Happier men shall pluck the laurel  
For the tresses that they love,  
And the passionate pale coral  
Wreath round brows I know not of.

[8] *The passing stranger*

Of all the mysteries wherethrough we move,  
This is the most mysterious – that a face,  
Seen peradventure in some distant place,  
Whither we can return no more to prove  
The world - old sanctities of human love,  
Shall haunt our waking thoughts, and  
gather grace  
incorporate itself with every phase  
Whereby the soul aspires to God above.  
Thus are we wedded through that face to her  
Or him who bears it; nay, one fleeting glance,  
Fraught with a tale too deep for utterance,  
Even as a pebble cast into the sea,  
Will on the deep waves of our spirit stir  
Ripples that run through all eternity.

[9] *The invitation to the gondola*

Come forth; for Night is falling,  
The moon hangs round and red  
On the verge of the violet waters,  
Fronting the daylight dead.

Come forth; the liquid spaces  
Of sea and sky are one,  
Where outspread angel flame-wings  
Brood o'er the buried sun.

Bells call to bells from the islands,  
And far-off mountains rear  
Their shadowy crests in the crystal  
Of cloudless atmosphere.

A breeze from the sea is wafted;  
Lamp-litten Venice gleams  
With her towers and domes uplifted  
Like a city seen in dreams.

Her waterways are a tremble  
With melody far and wide,  
Borne from the phantom galleys  
That o'er the darkness glide.

There are stars in the heaven, and starry  
Are the wandering lights below;  
Come forth! for the Night is calling,  
Sea, City, and sky are aglow!

[10] *Love's voice*

Love, felt from afar, long sought, scarce found,  
On thee I call;

Here where with silvery silent sound,  
The smooth oars fall;  
Here where the glimmering water-ways,  
Above yon stair,  
Mirror one trembling lamp that plays  
In twilight air!

What sights, what sounds, O poignant Love  
Ere though wert flown,  
Quivered these darksome waves above,  
In darkness known!

I dare not dream thereof; the sting  
Of those dead eyes  
Is too acute and close a thing  
For one who dies.

Only I feel through glare and gloom,  
Where yon lamp falls,  
Dim spectres hurrying to their doom,  
And love's voice calls:

'Twas better thus toward death to glide,  
Soul-full of bliss  
Than with long life unsatisfied  
Life's crown to miss.

[11] *Ha'nacker Mill* – Hilaire Belloc  
*Sonnets and verses* (1923)

Sally is gone that was so kindly,  
Sally is gone from Ha'nacker Hill  
And the Briar grows ever since then so blindly;  
And ever since then the clapper is still...  
And the sweeps have fallen from  
Ha'nacker Mill.

Ha'nacker Hill is in Desolation:  
Ruin a-top and a field unploughed.  
And Spirits that call on a fallen nation,  
Spirits that loved her calling aloud,  
Spirits abroad in a windy cloud.

Spirits that call and no one answers –  
Ha'nacker's down and England's done.  
Wind and Thistle for pipe and dancers,  
And never a ploughman under the Sun:  
Never a ploughman. Never a one.

[12] *Snow* – Edward Thomas  
*Last Poems* (1918)

In the gloom of whiteness  
In the great silence of snow,  
A child was sighing and bitterly saying; "Oh,  
They have killed a white bird  
up there on her nest,  
The down is fluttering from her breast!"

And still it fell through that dusky brightness  
On the child crying for the bird of the snow.

[13] *Hawk and Buckle* – Robert Graves  
*Country Sentiment* (1920)

Where is the landlord of old Hawk and Buckle,  
And what of Master Straddler this hot summer  
weather?  
He's along in the tap-room with broad cheeks  
a-chuckle,  
And ten bold companions all drinking together.

Where is the ostler of old Hawk and Buckle,  
And what of Willy Jakeman this hot summer  
weather?



He is rubbing his eyes with a slow and lazy  
knuckle  
And waking from his nap on a bank of fresh  
heather.

Where is the daughter of old Hawk and  
Buckle,  
And what of Mistress Jenny this hot summer  
weather?  
She sits in the parlour with smell of  
honeysuckle,  
Trimming her bonnet with new red ostrich  
feather.

**Oh Fair to See**

[14] *I say "I'll seek her side"*  
Thomas Hardy  
*Time's Laughingstocks* (1909)

I say "I'll seek her side  
Ere hindrance interposes;"  
But eve in midnight closes  
And here I still abide.

When darkness wears I see  
Her sad eyes in a vision;  
They ask, "What indecision  
Detains you, Love, from me? –

"The creaking hinge is oiled,  
I have unbarred the backway,  
But you tread not the trackway  
And shall the thing be spoiled?  
"Far cockcrows echo shrill,  
The shadows are abating,

And I am waiting, waiting;  
But O, you tarry still."

[15] *Oh fair to see* – Christina Rossetti

Oh, fair to see  
Bloom-laden cherry tree,  
Arrayed in sunny white;  
An April day's delight,  
Oh, fair to see!

Oh, fair to see  
Fruit-laden cherry tree,  
With balls of shining red  
Decking a leafy head,  
Oh, fair to see!

[16] *As I lay in the early sun*  
Edward Shanks  
*The Queen of China* (1919)

As I lay in the early sun,  
Stretched in the grass, I thought upon  
My true love, my dear love,  
Who has my heart forever  
Who is my happiness when we meet,  
My sorrow when we sever.  
She is all fire when I do burn,  
Gentle when I moody turn,  
Brave when I am sad and heavy  
And all laughter when I am merry.  
And so I lay and dreamed and dreamed,  
And so the day wheeled on,  
While all the birds with thoughts like mine  
Were singing to the sun.

[17] *Only the wanderer* – Ivor Gurney  
*Severn and Somme* (1917)

Only the wanderer  
Knows England's graces,  
Or can anew see clear  
Familiar faces.

And who loves joy as he  
Who dwells in shadows?  
Do not forget me quite,  
O Severn meadows.

[18] *To Joy* – Edmund Blunden

Is not this enough for moan  
To see this babe all motherless –  
A babe beloved – thrust out alone  
Upon death's wilderness?  
Our tears fall, fall, fall – I would weep  
My blood away to make her warm,  
Who never went on earth one step,  
Nor heard the breath of the storm.  
How shall you go, my little child,  
Alone on that most wintry wild?

[19] *Harvest* – Edmund Blanden

So there's my year, the twelvemonth duly told  
Since last I climbed this brow and gloated  
round  
Upon the lands heaped with their wheaten  
gold,  
And now again they spread with wealth  
imbrowned –  
And thriftless I meanwhile,  
What honeycombs have I to take, what  
sheaves to pile?

I see some shrivelled fruits upon my tree,  
And gladly would self-kindness feign them  
sweet;  
The bloom smelled heavenly, can these  
stragglers be  
The fruit of that bright birth and this wry wheat,  
Can this be from those spires  
which I, or fancy, saw leap to the spring sun's  
fires?

I peer, I count, but anxious is not rich,  
My harvest is not come, the weeds run high;  
Even poison-berries, ramping from the ditch  
Have stormed the undefended ridges by;  
What Michaelmas is mine!  
The fields I sought to serve, for sturdier tilage  
pine.

But hush – Earth's valleys sweet in leisure lie;  
And among them wandering up and down  
Will taste their berries, like the bird or fly,  
And of their gleanings make both feast and  
crown.

The Sun's eye laughing looks.  
And Earth accuses none that goes among her  
stooks.

[20] *Since we loved* – Robert Bridges

Since we loved, (the earth that shook  
As we kissed, fresh beauty took)  
Love has been as poet's paint,  
Life as heaven is to a saint;  
All my joys my hope excel,  
All my work hath prosper'd well,  
All my songs have happy been,  
O my love, my life, my queen.

