

**EXCERPT FROM “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” (1798)**  
**William Wordsworth**

	These beautiful forms,	
Through a long absence, have not been to me		
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:		
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din	25	
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,		
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,		
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;		
And passing even into my purer mind		
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too	30	
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,		
As have no slight or trivial influence		
On that best portion of a good man's life,		
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts		
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,	35	
To them I may have owed another gift,		
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,		
In which the burthen of the mystery,		
In which the heavy and the weary weight		
Of all this unintelligible world,	40	
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,		
In which the affections gently lead us on,—		
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame		
And even the motion of our human blood		
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep	45	
In body, and become a living soul:		
While with an eye made quiet by the power		
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,		
We see into the life of things.		

**43 corporeal:** having to do with the body

## Blank Verse Poetry

### "This Lime-tree Bower my Prison" (1797)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

[Addressed to Charles Lamb, of the India House, London]

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain, 1  
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost  
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been  
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age  
Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile, 5  
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,  
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,  
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,  
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;  
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep, 10  
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;  
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock  
Flings arching like a bridge;—that branchless ash,  
Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves  
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still, 15  
Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends  
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,  
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)  
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge  
Of the blue clay-stone. 20

Now, my friends emerge  
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again  
The many-steepled tract magnificent  
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,  
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up 25  
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles  
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on  
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,  
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined  
And hunger'd after Nature, many a year, 30  
In the great City pent, winning thy way  
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain  
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink  
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!  
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb, 35  
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!  
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!  
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend  
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,  
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round 40  
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem  
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues  
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes  
Spirits perceive his presence.

#### Helpful Information:

**2 bower:** pleasant shady place

**8 perchance:** perhaps

**9 dell:** a small valley, usually among trees

**14 unsun'd:** without sun; in the shade

**15 gale:** strong wind

**17 lank:** thin

**23** Comparison between hills and steeples of churches that are visible when you approach the village.

**26 betwixt:** between

**29 gentle-hearted Charles:** reference to Charles Lamb, Coleridge's best friend, to whom the poem is addressed  
**pined:** longed for, desired

**31 pent:** closely confined

**35 sinking orb:** setting sun

**36 richlier:** more rich (in color)

**38 my friend:** addresses Charles Lamb

**42 gross:** dense, thick, solid

## Blank Verse Poetry

### "This Lime-tree Bower my Prison" (1797) - continued

A delight 45  
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad  
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,  
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd  
Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze  
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd 50  
Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see  
The shadow of the leaf and stem above  
Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree  
Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay  
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps 55  
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass  
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue  
Through the late twilight: and though now the bat  
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,  
Yet still the solitary humble-bee 60  
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know  
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;  
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,  
No waste so vacant, but may well employ  
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart 70  
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes  
'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,  
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate  
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.  
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook 75  
Beat its straight path along the dusky air  
Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing  
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)  
Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,  
While thou stood'st gazing; or, when all was still, 80  
Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm  
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom  
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

#### Helpful Information:

**47 bower:** pleasant shady place

**49 the blaze:** sunshine

**53 dappling:** marked with spots or rounded patches (The sun is shining and making dots of sunlight on the leaves)

**55 usurps:** to take power by force

**59 swallow:** type of bird  
**twitters:** sound a bird makes; chirps

**70 faculty:** ability, capacity, aptitude

**72 bereft:** deprived of, lacking

**75 rook:** crow (bird)

**83 dissonant:** lacking harmony; unsuitable or unusual combination

## Blank Verse Poetry

### "Frost at Midnight" (1798) Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Frost performs its secret ministry, 1  
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry  
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.  
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest, 5  
Have left me to that solitude, which suits  
Abstruser musings: save that at my side  
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.  
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs  
And vexes meditation with its strange  
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood, 10  
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,  
With all the numberless goings-on of life,  
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame  
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;  
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate, 15

Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.  
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature  
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,  
Making it a companionable form, 20  
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit  
By its own moods interprets, every where  
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,  
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,  
How oft, at school, with most believing mind, 25  
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,  
To watch that fluttering *stranger*! and as oft  
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt  
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower, 30  
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang  
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,  
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me  
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear  
Most like articulate sounds of things to come! 35  
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,  
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!  
And so I brooded all the following morn,  
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye  
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book: 40  
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched  
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,  
For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,  
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,  
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

#### Helpful Information:

**6 abstruser:** deliberately hiding facts or complete information about something

**9 vex:** bother, annoy, pester, irritate

**15 film:** soot or ashes from the fire  
**grate:** part of fireplace where ashes fall

**16 sole:** one and only

**19 companionable:** friendly, sociable

**20-23** Still referring to the soot/ashes (film) that fluttered out of the fire and describing the way it moves freely about.

**26 presageful:** a feeling of foreboding or that something bad will happen soon

**38 preceptor:** teacher

**39 swimming book:** words on the page are moving around because the speaker is tired

## Blank Verse Poetry

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### "Frost at Midnight" (1798) - continued

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side, 45  
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,  
Fill up the interspersed vacancies  
And momentary pauses of the thought!  
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart  
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee, 50  
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,  
And in far other scenes! For I was reared  
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,  
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.  
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze 55  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible 60  
Of that eternal language, which thy God  
Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
Himself in all, and all things in himself.  
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould  
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask. 65

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch 70  
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall  
Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon. 75

#### **Helpful Information:**

**47 interspersed:** scattered about randomly

**51 learn far other lore:** learn information about a wide variety of topics

**52 reared:** raised, brought up (in)

**53 pent'mid:** (pent amid), lived in  
**cloisters:** a small living space (often used to describe convents or monasteries)

**64 mould:** mold, create, form

**68 redbreast:** robin redbreast (type of bird)

**69 betwixt:** between

**70 thatch:** straw

## Blank Verse Poetry

### EXCERPT FROM “Fra Lippo Lippi” (1855) Robert Browning

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave! 1  
You need not clap your torches to my face.  
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!  
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,  
And here you catch me at an alley's end 5  
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?  
The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it up,  
Do, — harry out, if you must show your zeal,  
Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,  
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse, 10  
*Weke, weke*, that's crept to keep him company!  
Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take  
Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,  
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?  
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend 15  
Three streets off — he's a certain ... how d'ye call?  
Master — a ... Cosimo of the Medici,  
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!  
Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,  
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe! 20  
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves  
Pick up a manner nor discredit you:  
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets  
And count fair prize what comes into their net?  
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is! 25  
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.  
Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go  
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health  
Of the munificent House that harbours me  
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!) 30  
And all's come square again. I'd like his face —  
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door  
With the pike and lantern, — for the slave that holds  
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair  
With one hand (“Look you, now,” as who should say) 35  
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!  
It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,  
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!  
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.  
What, Brother Lippo's doings, up and down, 40  
You know them and they take you? like enough!  
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye —  
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.  
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.

#### Helpful Information:

**\*Background info:** This poem is a monologue that portrays the dawn of the Renaissance in Italy at a point when the medieval attitude toward life and art was about to be displaced by a fresh appreciation of earthly pleasures. Fra Lippo Lippi was a real Florentine (Italian) monk and painter. The man in this poem is drunk out past curfew. He is stopped Medici (Italian) watchmen and is explaining to them the difficulty of life as a monk and his concerns about art and the nature of art.

**3 Zooks:** a shortened version of “gadzooks”, a mild swear word.

**7 Santa Maria del Carmine,** a church and cloister (monastery) of the Carmelite order of friars to which Lippi belonged.

**8 harry out:** harass, torment, plunder

**10 softling:** soft piece of fur

**11 weke:** “awake” (comparing Medici watchmen to rats, joining their friends and waking them up)

**17 Cosimo of the Medici:** the name of Lippi's patron, a banker and virtual ruler of Florence, Italy during this time period

**20 ...how you had the arrogance to choke the throat of someone as well connected as I am**

**21 “you”:** directly addressing the officer in charge of the group of watchmen

**23 pilchards:** small fish

**25** One of the watchmen has a face that looks exactly like Judas', the man who betrayed Jesus for money

**27 hangdogs:** henchmen, helpers

**28** Buy a drink (worth a quarter of a florin)

**29 munificent:** generous

**38 wood-coal:** piece of charcoal (for painting a charcoal sketch)