

THOMAS KINGO (1634–1703)

Weary of the world, and with heaven most dear

Farewell, world, farewell
As thrall here I'm weary and no more will dwell,
The manifold burdens that on me have lain,
I wrest them now from me and do them disdain,
I wrench myself free, though am wearied withal:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

And what everywhere
Does this world embellish with visage so fair?
 'Tis all merely shadows and baubles of glass,
 'Tis all merely bubbles and clattering brass,
 'Tis all but thin ice, filth and mischief withal:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

My years what are they?
That furtively dwindle and sidle away?
And what are my worries? My thought-troubled mind?
My joy or my sorrow? My fancies so blind?
And what do my work, moil and toil all recall?
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

Oh riches and gold,
You false earthly idol so bright to behold,
You are though among the deceits the world brings
That wax, wane and alter with all other things.
You are but vain glory whate'er may befall:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

Ah, honour – 'tis what?
Your crowns and your laurels proclaim what you're not,
And envy consumes you and sits on your back,
You lack peace of mind and are prone to attack!
You stumble where others contrive not to fall:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

Ah, favour and grace
That mist-like enfold us, are gone without trace.
You fickle inflator that puffs up the mind,
You thousand-eyed creature that e'en so are blind,
When viewed 'gainst the sun one can see that you pall:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

Ah, friendship and trust,
That veers vanes to happiness with every gust!
You handsome deceiver, you fortunate pup,
That fails us so often in sorrow's deep cup
You say what experience has us recall:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

Ah, joys of the flesh
That many have fatally snared in their mesh,
You quick-burning tinder, you spark on the wind,
Have sown flames eternal for those that have sinned,
Your cup seems like honey, the drink though is gall:
 'Tis vanity all,
 'Tis vanity all.

Farewell, then, farewell
No more your deceits shall my soul now compel,
Oh world of delusion, I now you dismiss,
Consign to oblivion's deepest abyss,
My grief and affliction no more me shall chafe:
 With Abraham safe,
 With Abraham safe.

There all of my years
Will start in eternity's spring without tears,
My days will not dawn with the rise of the sun,
Nor moon's wax or wane tell when night has begun,
My sun is Lord Jesus with rays like gold staves:
 With Abraham safe,
 With Abraham safe.

My riches and gold
Will always be mine both to have and to hold,
No robber can ever deprive me of them,
No bartering cause me to part with one gem,
I never will find myself left as a waif:
With Abraham safe,
With Abraham safe.

My honour is won
From that throne my Jesus is sitting upon,
A crown filled with glory for me is in store,
With blood of the lamb it is gilt ever more,
'Tis mine though the devil me gladly would strafe:
With Abraham safe,
With Abraham safe.

With grace I will shine
As one of the angelic host so divine,
No envious eye shall my face ever see,
God's countenance gaze ever-smiling on me,
There will I pour scorn on death's envious grave:
With Abraham safe,
With Abraham safe.

There I have a friend,
My Jesus who loves me I love without end,
My eye will regard him unclouded and fair,
The heavenly torch of his love proffered there,
In spirit Love's blaze I eternal may crave:
With Abraham safe,
With Abraham safe.

My rapture and joy
Are quickened when angels their trumpets employ,
But God is all joy both for me and their kind!
Rejoice then, my soul, all the world leave behind!
Mind well on your heart God his joy will engrave:
With Abraham safe,
With Abraham safe.

THOMAS KINGO (1634–1703)

To each his destiny

Sorrow and joy hand in hand go together,
Fortune, misfortune as neighbours do dwell,
Luck and adversity call to each other
Sunshine and clouds are companions as well.
Earth's brightest gold
Is but fine mould,
Heaven alone is where bliss can unfold.

Gold crown and sceptre they sparkle and glitter,
Glitter is not, though, what royal robes imply.
Thousands of burdens a crown's weight embitter,
Thousandfold cares in a sceptre's power lie.
Life for a king
Unrest will bring
Heaven alone can give bliss without sting.

Everything's fortune is waxing and waning!
Everyone finds his own grief in his heart!
Often a breast, though bejewelled, is complaining,
Weighed down by woe and by rage torn apart!
Trials we have all,
Some large, some small,
Heaven alone is where cares cannot gall.

Wisdom, dominion and temporal glory,
Vigour and youth in the years of our prime,
Hold their head high, but the end of the story
Is that they perish when ravished by time!
All things must end
None can contend
Heavenly bliss can alone all transcend!

Fairest of roses have sharp thorns aquiver,
Loveliest flowers their poisonous sap,
'Neath rosy cheeks can a heart always wither,
Strange how a destiny each does enwrap!
As storm-tossed boat,
Our land's afloat,
Heaven alone all sweet bliss does promote.

Well then! No worry shall me overpower
Should the world not do as I'd have prevail!
No tribulation shall cause me to cower
Nothing shall cause my heart ever to fail!
Sorrow shall die,
Joy's seeds on high
On heaven's isle of pure bliss multiply.

Fear shall give rise to a joy that's enduring,
Agony's distaff from tufts spin fine thread!
Poverty rich robes shall make most alluring,
Weakness on sound legs shall rise from his bed!
Envy shall stand
Cornered, unmanned,
Heaven alone all of this can command!

Let then my fate and my fortune be fashioned
As does my LORD and my MASTER desire,
Let no spite reign, nor no envious passion,
Let but the world do as it would conspire!
Time's loom will stare
Empty and bare,
Heaven will weave all that is to be there.

HANS ADOLPH BRORSON (1694–1764)

Up! Everything that God has made

Up! Everything that God has made,
His glory now be praising,
The smallest creature too is great,
And proves his might amazing.

Though earth's great kings came forward, clad
In all their might and mettle,
The smallest leaf they could not add
To but a single nettle.

Yea! all the angels with their power,
Like sceptres in high station,
Have never caused at any hour
A speck of dust's creation.

The smallest blade in vale or wood
No wonder can excel it,
Where should I wisdom gain and could
Find ample words to tell it?

What should I do now when my mind
Is slow in comprehending
How great the host of humankind
Their earthly way are wending.

What shall I utter, when I see
The woods with life abounding,
The many birds that leap with glee
Beneath the heaven's rounding?

What shall I utter, when I walk
Among the meadow's flowers,
When all the birds in song do talk
Like thousand harp-string showers?

What shall I utter, when my mind
Down on the sea's bed merely
So little in its depths can find
And many mouths see clearly?

What shall I utter, when I yearn
To gaze at heaven rightly,
And all my thoughts will upwards turn
To where the sun reigns brightly?

What shall I utter, when I see
How hosts of stars are gleaming,
How mildly each smiles down at me,
And I return their beaming?

What shall I utter, when I soar
In spirit to my Maker?
And see th'angelic hosts in awe
Stand mustered by the acre?

What shall I utter? All I say
Says nothing and seems mindless;
Oh God! Your wisdom rules alway,
As do your power and kindness.

All that's imbued with spirit shall
Our Maker soon be meeting.
His praise shall sound in hill and vale,
This earthly world completing.

Oh! Praise the Lord all those below
With voice and senses willing,
And all who dwell above now show
Our Maker's praise in singing.

Let all below with one accord
Join joyfully in winging
Their Hallelujah! Great our Lord –
Amen the heav'ns are ringing.

HANS ADOLPH BRORSON (1694–1764)

The fairest of roses

Now found is the fairest of roses
Its beauty midst thorns it discloses,
Our Jesus this offshoot and dower
Midst us human sinners did flower.

Since lost is the glory of bearing
The fruit of god's image, uncaring
The world has seemed, barren and wasted,
We all by our sins death have tasted.

As thistles to nought can aspire
Than all be consigned to the fire,
So too was the world fit for burning
And cursed with no hope of returning.

Then God let a rose thrive and flower.
Its seed He did further empower
To cleanse and to sweeten entirely
The yield that was ruined so direly.

Now God's Church its glory is wearing,
The finest of fruits can be bearing,
For Jesus its yield is reviving,
The plants with new sap are all thriving.

The whole world with joy should be singing,
The air with glad psalms should be ringing,
But many are deaf to the telling:
The rose in the world has its dwelling.

You thistle-minds, hardened and sickly,
As statues so stiff, thorns so prickly,
Why stand you there tall and unblinking
In pride's so depraved way of thinking?

Oh, seek what is low and in keeping,
In dust for your Saviour be weeping,
Then you will our Jesus be knowing,
For roses in valleys are growing.

You, Jesus, will be beyond measure
My rose and my glory, my treasure,
My heart you have captured completely,
Your sweetness does nourish and feed me.

My rose is my jewel and my treasure,
My rose is my joy and my pleasure;
My poisonous lusts you have beaten,
The cross you deliciously sweeten.

Let this cruel world seek to ensnare me,
Let thorns try to scratch, rend and tear me,
Let life from my poor heart be taken,
My rose will remain unforsaken.

AMBROSIUS STUB (1705–58)

You rosebud sweet and fair

You rosebud sweet and fair!
Close to, let me inspect you!
Each man must needs respect you,
 In you all nature's art
 And splendour dwell apart;
Each petal's coloured feather
Leaves us uncertain whether
 Apparel neat and trim
 Says more than splendour's whim:
A maze where coloured petals –
In paths where each unsettles –
 Add fragrance to the air;
You rosebud sweet and fair!

Today, alas, you're gone,
But yesterday with pleasure
I viewed your thorn-borne treasure;
 I plucked you, whereupon
 Today, alas, you're gone.
Your bright shades fade and pall
Your dull red tells me all
 Your glory is but brief
 Your beauty held in fief;
You jewel of nature's crown,
Where now is your fine gown?
 Your blossoming is done,
 Today, alas, you're gone.

Come, Phyllis, come and see
My rose does now invite you;
Your beauty won't requite you;
 Come, Phyllis, come and see!
 Your image view quite freely!
All that's a source of pleasure
Cheeks crimson beyond measure,
 That mouth, its honeyed ploy
 Those eyes, their sparkling joy
That neat body, those neat hands
That every favour do command
 Do fade; come, Phyllis, see
 Your image view quite freely!

One beauty outlasts others –
When all else only withers –
And years and age outweathers,
And gains eternal vales
One beauty never fails.
Virtue, Phyllis, its name,
Seek it ere time's no claim!
And that a spirit true
May dwell as is its due,
Live but to praise your maker
In virtue be its taker!
So when all else does wither,
Your beauty lasts forever.

AMBROSIUS STUB (1705–58)

The tiresome winter now is gone

Aria

The tiresome winter now is gone
The day so short, the night so long
At gentle pace
Do change their face,
Now must dark clouds and winds that bite – take flight;
The fireplace stands alone, unstacked,
And each day's cold by shakes is racked;
The fleece-lined coat and doublet warm
Are hung away and held to scorn,
The muff is likewise out of kind – and mind;
One fears no more that snow and sleet
On going out one then will meet;
So let us rise
And now apprize
How sweetly nature does beguile – and smile.

Oh see, how richly dressed the sun
With gold-tressed hair its course does run
Its ring of fire
Can but inspire
All things that now accrue – anew;
The blue sky up above so clear
Is worth a gaze, both far and near;
See all the birds in mighty squalls,
That fill the air's wide summer halls,
Their joy they constantly prolong – in song;
They daily two by two compete
To make their nesting-place complete,
Look, past one streaks
With twig in beak,
Another culls small hairs and straws – then soars.

Oh see! the fields are looking well
The farmer, though the whole world's thrall,
Now smiles to see
His slavery
Will end in their increase – in peace,
The lambs at random play and leap,
And frolic mongst the meadow's sheep,
They kneel with joyful heart at rest
And suckle at their mother's breast,
By every single drop refreshed – afresh.
The shepherd there guards flock and corn;
A dog's sharp bark, a call of horn,
Are all his art,
Though all in part;
How sweetly do the woods reply – nearby.

Oh see, a sight most passing fair
At wood's green eyelids over there
Each tall tree crest
Is being dressed,
And spring decks out the beech with pride – as bride.
So when the sun burns like a torch,
And breast and lap does almost scorch,
Behind each leaf is refuge found
When weary heads seek sheltered ground.
Here tea refreshes, as does wine – from Rhine,
And meanwhile one may gaze intent
At what is nature's parliament,
The birds rejoice
With well-tuned voice,
The agile beasts will nimbly dance – and prance.

Oh see, how mirror-smooth and clear
The lake is fashioned over here,
 It almost seems
 The sun most dreams
Of gazing at its visage fair – down there,
 The fish once caught in filth and mire
 That frost and net could not acquire,
 Now feels the urge to live and breed
 And freely sports midst rush and reed,
See here, how proudly fins now flash – and splash.
 The frog now croaks its serenade
 When drowsy day begins to fade,
 With blade of grass
 I watch time pass
And end my walk that took so long – in song.

So do the water, sky and earth
By my Creator gain rebirth,
 I roamed among
 World's mighty throng,
God's providence will pass by none – not one.
 Oh troubled soul! Will you just look
 And see all things are in His book,
 Whate'er befalls, I know full well
 That I among them all may dwell,
God is still mindful of my need – indeed,
 He's sure to find the perfect time
 When heaven's bells will peel and chime;
 It could just be
 I too may see
My winter will as spring appear – this year.

JOHAN HERMAN WESSEL (1742–85)

Epitaph

I, the late Owe Gierløv Meyer,
Did stupid things my life entire,
Though this time I did five of them,
The last of which was quite a gem;
For I went home and cut my throat,
And here I sit, in Hell's deep moat,
Where now the devil sets on fire
Me, the late Owe Gierløv Meyer.

The poet's epitaph upon himself

He ate and drank, was never glad,
His boot heels he wore down one side;
Ambition – that he never had,
And finally just upped and died.

JOHANNES EWALD (1743–81)

When I was ill

Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis – Horace:

Happy the man, who far from life's allure
Is not too rich – and likewise not too poor
Whose soul untroubled then can contemplate,
The being too that it should emulate!
Should fools' acclaim and glory's empty shell –
Should heaps of gleaming metal and their spell –
Should golden chains – a slave that has been crowned –
The world – as dear as our own soul be found?
Why did your once strong soul sink helplessly,
You first of men – deep – to inconstancy?
Why did you quail at the Almighty's hand?
Distraction your wise spirit not withstand?
For all distraction marks the soul's demise,
At anger's voice all thoughts are scattered wide
In great confusion they now reel about
Midst things both good and bad weave in and out,
Soul hold to blessedness! – 'tis yours today!
By dust you are from heaven called away!
Chimera swallows all the dust you saw!
Your own thoughts you do not know any more!
Ah! – when devotion – when my prayers are warm,
When I uplifted – high – on mercy's arm,
Spread God abroad – and feel divinely blessed,
Why does Dorine then come to my breast?
And when I found pure love in its full flush
The fire at which no wise man e'er would blush,
Why does a thought of Homer then wrench free
My soul from that fair Helen whom I see?
Ah! were our thoughts but constant, good and wise
Our soul would find – and stay in paradise!
For blessedness reflection can espy
It feels it but is not attached thereby.
Oh child of Adam! – oh unhappy one!
Why do you seek distraction you should shun?
Why are you faint? – Behold the maelstrom – quake!
Think now! – is not your precious self at stake?

Happy the man who's not by clink so gay
Of brimful glass – nor by the sirens' lay
Nor the enslaving voice of gold – nor clash
Of murd'rous steel, nor by some herald brash
Nor false friends' mocking tones – nor wretches' tears
The tedium of bores – fools' counsel's snares
Nor by foes' mighty roar – or weak men's cries,
Deprived of God – joy – sense – himself likewise!
Welcome you poison raging in my breast!
Welcome all pain that has my joy suppressed!
And lack – you who it was took my last friend,
Welcome! – since you gave me myself again.
Since my Creator only can know pure delight,
And without others' help be happy quite,
I will then honour him – my self stay nigh,
Forget all fame – and gold – each roar – and cry!

JOHANNES EWALD (1743–81)

The delights of Rungsted. An Ode

You shadows refreshing,
 You darkness from roses now stealing;
Where busily nesting
 The songstress her home is revealing –,
 Where streams whose carousing
 Now lulls, now is rousing
The Muses' best darling, the sentient bard,
 With murmurings close to the heart –

Where cattle are lowing,
 At woodland-sons' fleet gallivanting,
And breathe hard at knowing
 The plenty in which they are panting –
 Where reapers are singing,
 Midst golden stacks swinging,
And count out their treasure and let cries resound
 To him who their hope now has crowned.

Where, skittishly playing,
 Waves wash o'er the roamer, who quick-eyed
First finds his gaze straying
 At Helsingør's grey-shaded hillside
 Then wond'ringly hastens
 Through forests of masts and
Inspects, then makes out foreign flags straight away,
 Forgetting the fast-waning day. –

Where balm of the lonely,
 Sweet slumber so gently relieving,
Louise oft solely
 Could help one forget the heart's grieving –
 Where joys offer home, a
 Repose for the roamer,
Where Rungsted encloses delights pure and chaste:
 There did the muse fill my breast.

Where pain and affliction,
With joy found your imprint, Oh High One,
The pure heart's depiction
By every compassionate eye won –
Where friendship adds worth to
The strictest of virtues;
There did my song grow; and the forest in awe
Re-echoed the Great Maker's law.

I saw your thrones gleam too,
Almighty! – my gaze all aquiver –
But tones divine passed through
The strings with each shiver –
Each leaf where I sighted
The High One ignited
My soul – and exulted at which my song swelled! –
The mighty sound could not be quelled! –

Oh all the Worlds' Father! –
So sang I – You Strong One! – You Wise One!
God! Whom myriads are
Now praising as do heaven's prized ones!
See, how dust can carry
Your plenty, your glory,
Your goodness, oh Father! – so sang I – and joy
My lips' quaking sound did employ. –

O poet most blissful,
That gladness bade come to his dwelling;
To duties most cheerful,
To freedom, though virtues compelling! –
All cherubs while winging
His bold voice hear ringing,
And heavens are gathered around him; and joy
Unfolds in man's breast, ne'er to cloy.

But you, you alone drew
From anguish such joy beyond measure
Say! – has my muse power to
Unfold in your heart greatest pleasure?
O sweet friend, recite me! –
Can song's goddess lightly
With soft-melting notes the lap then reward
That me such delight did afford? –

JOHANNES EWALD (1743–81)

**Johannes Ewald's last poetic sentiments
some hours prior to his death**

To arms, hero of Calvary!
Lift high your bright-red shield;
For sin and dread – as you can see –
By force would have me yield.

In righteous ire your sword outstretch
'Gainst those who you defy!
Hurl from the light – and me, poor wretch –
Such foes before I die.

Safe in your hand I then will view
My death without dismay;
And my saved spirit offer you
On its now unmade clay.

Oh Lord! rest and relief vouchsafe;
Though if you would chastise me,
Teach me endurance – prayer – and faith,
Let my heart CHRIST suffice me.

JENS BAGGESEN (1764–1826)

To Death

A thought of Seneca

Death! I have no cause to fear you!
Safe my path through life I tread;
If I'm here, then I'm not near you,
If you're here, then I am dead.

JENS BAGGESEN (1764–1826)

When I was small

There was a time when I was very small
A mere two feet was all I measured then;
And, when I think of this, tears sweetly fall,
So of it I think time and time again.

In tender mother's arms in play I grew
And on dear father's knee to ride I'd seek,
Of fear and brooding, grief and wrath I knew
As little as of gold and ancient Greek.

The earth much smaller then to me did seem
But at the same time much less evil too:
Then did I see the stars like bright dots gleam,
And wished for wings to seize them as I flew.

I saw the moon then slide behind the hill,
And thought: If only I were standing there!
Then I can really find out if I will
Of what it is – how big, how round, how fair!

I saw the sun then in amazement dive
Into the sea's gold lap far in the West
And yet at early dawn once more contrive
To have the Eastern sky in crimson dressed.

And of my Heav'nly Father did I think
Who me and this fine sun created whole,
And all these nighttime pearls on their great string
That span the starry vault from pole to pole.

With reverential lips did I repeat
The prayer my pious mother had me say:
O gracious God! Oh let me always seek
To be both wise and good, and You obey!

I prayed then for my father and my mother,
And for my sister and for all the town;
And for King Christian, and for the poor beggar
Who passed me by, deep sighing and bent down.

All gone, all gone, my childhood's golden lustre!
My peace of mind, my joy with them are gone;
The memory of them is all that I can muster:
May I, please God, ne'er lose what once so shone!

SCHACK STAFFELDT (1769–1826)

Initiation

I sat far out on the sound's still shore,
The skies were smiling;
And filled with longing I gazed down o'er
The waves beguiling.
The sun slipped into the sea's embrace,
The coast and sky joined in blushing grace.

With sweet foreboding a harp I heard,
The clouds now rending;
The muse descended, in sunlight girt,
Her lyre extending.
She sealed my lips with kiss of fire
And sank down into her shimmering pyre.

Then all around me the world was new:
The winds spoke softly;
From pale clouds drifting before the moon
Called spirits lofty;
In all creation a loving heart beat,
My own reflection in all did I meet.

Since then the earth each thought and desire
Does now imprison;
Though dreams ease longing, as do song's lyre
And premonition,
The kiss consumes me, no peace can see birth
Before the skies I bring down to earth!

The One

All that is beautiful dies, that the spirit shall gain no contentment
In its debased human state: longings shall thus here below
Man's bosom forever consume, like the lamp in a dark night-time dungeon,
Which, at the dread dead of night, a mark on the light of the sky.
Man! it is not what you own, but what you long for and crave for,
This is your treasure most dear, this is your value most high,
The glorious you can but own by suffering great deprivation:
Man's fall is stricture, longing its heavenmost flight.
All that is beautiful dies, the world of symbols knows change,
And in different signs the One expresses itself.
Delve in the world's annals: there centuries lie in succession,
Like strata washed ashore, deposit and trace of the spirit.
The globe itself is a ruin, and, like mould that now crumbles on walls,
Out of the granite's great rifts sprouts what will later be spring.
One single thing can stand firm through the rise and the fall of the ages,
One single thing ever was, is and will be as before:
Eternal life is its name, which, like blood from the heart, flows
Through all nature, flows outwards and later returns;
So too the soul shows itself, its mien always changing
Its features uncountable, constantly one and the same.
Therefore this only exists, in which the One can reside,
The idea only, as shield, repels all that passes away.
In your life's work of art this is why you present the idea,
Attune to your own nature, that nature eternal as God,
You are otherwise lost, like bubbles that burst on the sea:
The sea still remains, but its bubble, its bright-coloured child?
Should though the idea transfuse your deep, significant life,
You are immortal – in God as God is in you.
Exceptional natures withdraw now their summit from time,

Like mountain peaks, seen far beyond the flood's surface.
 Of old it was otherwise, otherwise will it be later,
 The future a mere repetition of a time long since past.
 Yes! there once was an age when, childlike, all nature expressed
 With imprint most faithful the eternal traits of the father,
 When as yet, like ripening fruit, it had not left the bough
 And in its bold fall become free though ephemeral.
 As yet behind the eclipse of the past the *golden* sphere rolls,
 As yet it keeps poetry still in its most rhythmical bands;
 All longings swarm thither, like castaways, who from the rocks,
 Naked, in direst distress, see far off the bay that they crave.
 Was is the plaintive myth, *will be* the joyous prediction,
 Myth and religion, fond memory and much desired hope,
 Poles of time are they, vainly and constantly seeking each other,
 Until they melt into One, there where time is no more. –
 Self-seeking *Present*, rooted but in the moment,
 World-life for you can but stand in its midwinter solstice;
 Necessity you do defy and freedom's sceptre do flaunt?
 Free in defection are you, your freedom the choice of a yoke.
 Know then that selfdom is raging rebellion in nature,
 And sin that is monstrous freedom's gargantuan child;
 Selfdom the son's great revolt against what life him has granted,
 Only the *death of the Son* can ever atone for the crime –
 So may you die, nature, like fever's groundless delusion,
 And cured from you, slowly, with passage of time,
 May life that now is engendered strive for the world's blessed heart,
 And in unity's lap, atoned for, may consciousness die.

SCHACK STAFFELDT (1769–1826)

Sunset Glow

Rose held in a vase of clearest glaze
Up from wat'ry sunlight-grave ascending
 Every time from nature's mourning gaze
Her close friend to other worlds is wending!

Moon's pale visage, in lone blush for you,
Dares observe your crimson petal cluster;
 Heavens' stars maintain their distant view,
Lovers, though with silent, hidden lustre.

Beauteous heav'nly flower of light and air,
Of the purest ones a holy daughter!
 Evening garners all spring's fragrance fair
In your crimson calyx as an altar.

Night, alas, advances from the east,
Its domain so stealthily diffusing;
 Heav'nly rose! for eyes though still a feast,
You anon dull petals must be losing.

Roses! your sweet sister's life is told,
Weep in tribute dear your dew of mourning!
 Larks! rejoice when you again behold
Hope's sweet rose on eastern peaks of morning!

ADAM OEHLENSCHLÄGER (1779–1850)

Where are you now, you roses red

Where are you now, you roses red
From days of youth so blissful?
I keep your petals long since shed
In recollection's missal.

And though each petal's dull and grey,
Its shade like those departed,
I still recall the summer day
When crimson they all started.

In their silk weave I still can view
Each vein so finely fretted.
Once moistened by the morning dew,
Now by my tears it's wetted.

STEEN STEENSEN BLICHER (1782–1848)

Prelude

The time approaches for me to part!
Now winter's voice is compelling;
A bird of passage, I know my heart
In other climes has its dwelling.

I have long known that I cannot stay;
Though this is no cause for grieving,
So free from care as I wend my way
I sing at times before leaving.

I should at times have perhaps sung more –
Or should perhaps have sung better;
But dark days crowded oft to the fore,
And gales my feathers did scatter.

In God's fair world I would fain have tried
To spread my wings out in freedom;
But I'm imprisoned on every side
And can't escape from my thralldom.

From lofty skies would I fain have tried
To blithely sing and not fretted;
But for my shelter and food must bide
A jailbird poor and indebted.

At times I make the consoling choice
To let my gaze outward wander:
And sometimes send my poor mournful voice
Through prison bars yearning yonder.

Then listen, traveller, to this song;
To pass this way please endeavour!
It might, God knows, not last very long
Before this voice fades for ever.

This coming evening, I can foretell,
May see my prison bars breaking;
For I will sing now a fond farewell,
Perhaps my final leave-taking.

N.F.S. GRUNDTVIG (1783–1872)

The bright blessed day with joy we see

The bright blessed day with joy we see
Rise out of the sea at dawning;
It lightens the sky unceasingly,
Our gain and delight adorning!
As children of light we sense that soon
Dark night will give way to morning!

Our Lord chose the blessed midnight hour
To come down without our knowing,
Then clear in the east in dawn's pale bower
The sun's hues in strength were growing:
Then light filled the sky, in which the earth
Shall shimmer with inner glowing!

Were each forest tree to come alive,
And each leaf a voice be granted,
The law of God's mercy they'd contrive
In vain in words to have chanted;
Since Life's Light now shines for ever more,
In old and young firmly planted!

Yea, though every blade of grass could speak,
In meadow or field or clearing,
A thanksgiving hymn they could not seek
To sing for our human hearing,
Befitting the day, for light and life,
While eons their course are steering.

In vain would the weak man try who chose
To conquer the mountain summit,
The eagle is wily, though, and knows
The wind will not let it plummet,
And even the small blithe lark can brave
The sky and yet overcome it.

The river so brash with thund'rous noise
From crag-face comes downwards crashing
The streams down below have no such voice,
Though murmur with gentle plashing,
So gently they wind through grassy lea
Up under the lime trees splashing!

So thank we our God, our father good,
As larks in their dawn-time chorus,
For each day he gave, as so we should
For life he from death won for us,
For all that has nurtured human souls
For thousands of years before us!

As long as we see the golden day,
And woods are the Danes' own bowers,
We'll deck every pew with sprigs of may
And forefathers' graves with flowers
A wonderful feast of life and joy,
A Whitsuntide gift that's ours!

And then from our eyes will start to flow
Mild tears like a stream now thriving,
And streams join and to a river grow
That fain for Life's Source is striving
It secretly gains, like some deep sigh,
So early yet late arriving!

And no day can have so long a growth
That evening cannot be sighted,
Its light and its setting sun are both
What God in his church has lighted;
But ever again it dawns anew
For hearts who in morn delighted!

Let day gently glide this Whitsuntide,
With haloing rays full-flashing!
The hours pleasing God as past they slide,
As meadowland stream soft-plashing,
So joyously now the last one winds,
Up under the lime trees splashing!

Like gold is the dawn just moments old,
When day from its death is rising,
Yet we too are kissed with lips of gold
By sunset so sweet-enticing,
Then every dull gaze will glint afresh,
Pale cheeks with new blush surprising!

We'll journey then to our fatherland,
Where no day lies still thereafter,
Where stands a strong castle, proud and grand,
Whose halls all resound with laughter,
And there we will talk till time is done
In light with our friends hereafter!

N.F.S. GRUNDTVIG (1783–1872)

The land of the living

I know of a land
Where hair does not grey, and where time's rule is banned,
Where sun does not burn, and where wave does not ring,
Where autumn embraces the blossoming spring,
Where morning and evening unceasingly dance
In noon's brightest glance.

Oh, wonderful land,
Where glass does not run full of tear-drops as sand,
Where nothing is wanting that's worth holding dear,
Where that does not lack which so pained us back here!
With breast filled with longing we seek ever more
Your sweet-smiling shore.

Oh, long-promised land!
We greet you in morning hour's mirror-clear strand,
When perfect your shadow the child may espy
And dreams that in green woods is where you must lie,
Where too it can share with the rushes and flowers
Its smile and its hours.

Oh, transient dream
Of island eternal in time's rushing stream!
Of joy's sacred temple in life's vale of tears,
Of life half-divine in this hall's mortal years!
The land of the living with you melts away
From those made of clay.

Oh, hope-dashing dream!
You glittering bubble on time's rushing stream!
In vain would the poet, with voice and with pen,
From bright-gleaming shadows create you again;
Where shadow comes closest, the small will all weep
Who on it gaze deep.

Oh, spell-binding dream
Of pearl that's eternal in time's rushing stream!
You fool those poor persons who all seek in vain
In image and art what the heart would retain,
And make them call lasting what just disappears
Like days, months and years.

Oh, spirit of love!
Your hand let me kiss, reaching down from above
From heaven's fair skies to this earth's murky hold
And touching our eyes with its fingers of gold,
So blue-tinged there climbs behind surf-roaring strand
The wonderful land!

Oh, heavenly name,
Whose sacred embrace does our nature inflame,
So spirit can mingle with dust without grief
And bring back to life every dead withered leaf!
Oh, deep in my clay let me fall on my knee
So God may see me!

Oh, faith beyond bliss,
Whose high-vaulted bridge spans the gaping abyss
When drifting ice threatens in surf-roaring strand
From poor mortal dwelling to far promised land!
Come farther down to me, you high-honoured guest!
That pleases you best.

Oh, hope fleet of wing!
Oh, brother reborn through divine christening!
For all journeys made to the land o'er the sea,
Good tidings and comfort you've lavished on me,
May I ever thank you, so joy is in store
When hope is no more!

Oh, love perfect love!
Quiet source of fierce torrents that mightily move!
He calls you his father who ransoms our plight
Your spirit all soul's vital force does ignite;
Your kingdom is there where man death does defy;
May us it be nigh!

Our father sublime!
You willingly reign in earth's temple of grime,
Who builds up the spirit in Jesu's sweet name,
In human embrace with an altar aflame,
With heaven-bright dwelling of faith dearly won,
For you and your son.

Oh, Christian faith sweet!
You grant every heart what the world cannot greet;
What barely we glimpse while our eye is still blue,
Is living within us, we know this is true;
Both heaven and earth are my land, life confides
Where love e'er resides.

B.S. INGEMANN (1789–1862)

The sun that in the East does rise

The sun that in the East does rise
Drapes clouds with golden gown,
O'er seas and peaks it sails the skies,
O'er countryside and town.

It comes from that fair coast so bright
Where Paradise once lay;
It comes with joy and life and light
To great and small away.

It brings to us a greeting fine
From Eden's rising dawn,
Where stood the Tree with fruit sublime,
Where Life's pure fount was born.

It greets us from Life's home afar,
Where God's light did abound
O'er Bethlehem with that bright star
The East's Wise Men once found.

And with God's sun comes from the East
A distant heavn'ly glow,
A glimpse of Paradise's coast,
Where Life's great orchards grow.

And all the stars from near and far
Bow as East's sun gains height:
It seems to them so like the star
O'er Bethlehem that night.

You sun of suns from Bethlehem!
May thanks and praises rise
For every glint from Life's true home
And from your Paradise!

B.S. INGEMANN (1789–1862)

A castle stands 'neath western skies

A castle stands 'neath western skies
Gold shields its roof have studded;
The evening sun behind it dies
Midst cloud banks so newly ruddied.
That castle by no hand is wrought:
Perfectly though it's gilded;
Its gate soars up to heaven's court;
Our Lord Himself did once built it.

From thousand turrets sparkles gold,
Amber its gate is gleaming;
The sea reflects its walls of old,
With pillars of sun's rays teeming.
God's sun into its castle crowds,
Purple raiment inflaming,
On battlements in rosy clouds
Light's banner's glory proclaiming.

Sun's angel waves the flag of light,
Sets off for distant quarters;
Life, light and day him follow right
Behind night's loud foaming waters.
And like the sun life seeks the coast
Full of transfiguration
Where sun the east once more will host
With paradise as its station.