

ENGL 1100
Composition I
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POEMS AND SONGS

I. William Blake, "A Poison Tree" (1794)

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles,

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright,
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole;
In the morning glad I see:
My foe outstretchd beneath the tree.

II. Christina Rossetti, "Winter: My Secret" (1862)

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I:
 Perhaps some day, who knows?
 But not today; it froze, and blows and snows,
 And you're too curious: fie!
 You want to hear it? well:
 Only, my secret's mine, and I won't tell.

Or, after all, perhaps there's none:
 Suppose there is no secret after all,
 But only just my fun.
 To-day's a nipping day, a biting day;
 In which one wants a shawl,
 A veil, a cloak, and other wraps:
 I cannot ope to everyone who taps,
 And let the draughts come whistling through my hall;
 Come bounding and surrounding me,
 Come buffeting, astounding me,
 Nipping and clipping through my wraps and all.
 I wear my mask for warmth: who ever shows
 His nose to Russian snows
 To be pecked at by every wind that blows?
 You would not peck? I thank you for good will,
 Believe, but leave the truth untested still.

Spring's an expansive time: yet I don't trust
 March with its peck of dust,
 Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers,
 Nor ever May, whose flowers
 One frost may wither through sunless hours.

Perhaps some languid summer day,
 When drowsy birds sing less and less,
 And golden fruit is ripening to excess,
 If there's not too much sun nor too much cloud,
 And the warm wind is neither still nor loud,
 Perhaps my secret I may say,
 Or you may guess.

III. A. E. Housman, "Is My Team Ploughing" (1896)

"Is my team ploughing,
 That I was used to drive
 And hear the harness jingle
 When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,
 The harness jingles now;
 No change though you lie under
 The land you used to plough.

"Is football playing
 Along the river shore,
 With lads to chase the leather,
 Now I stand up no more?"

Ay, the ball is flying,
 The lads play heart and soul;
 The goal stands up, the keeper
 Stands up to keep the goal.

“Is my girl happy,
 That I thought hard to leave,
 And has she tired of weeping
 As she lies down at eve?”

Ay, she lies down lightly,
 She lies not down to weep:
 Your girl is well contented.
 Be still, my lad, and sleep.

“Is my friend hearty,
 Now I am thin and pine,
 And has he found to sleep in
 A better bed than mine?”

Yes, lad, I lie easy,
 I lie as lads would choose;
 I cheer a dead man’s sweetheart,
 Never ask me whose.

IV. Cole Porter, “I Hate Men” (1948)

I hate men.
 I can’t abide ’em even now and then.
 Than ever marry one of them, I’d rest a virgin rather,
 For husbands are a boring lot and only give you bother.
 Of course, I’m awfully glad that Mother had to marry Father,
 But I hate men!

Of all the types I've ever met within our democracy,
I hate the most the athlete with his manner bold and brassy.
He may have hair upon his chest, but, sister, so has Lassie.
Oh, I hate men!

I hate men.
Their worth upon this earth I dinna ken.
Avoid the traveling salesman though a tempting Tom he may be.
From China he will bring you jade and perfume from Araby.
But don't forget 'tis he who'll have the fun and thee the baby.
Oh, I hate men.
If thou shouldst wed a businessman, be wary, oh, be wary.
He'll tell you he's detained in town on business necessary.
His business is the business which he gives his secretary.
Oh, I hate men!

I hate men.
Though roosters they, I will not play the hen.
If you espouse an older man through girlish optimism,
He'll always stay at home at night and make no criticism.
Though you may call it love, the doctors call it rheumatism.
Oh, I hate men.
From all I've read, alone in bed, from A to Zed, about 'em,
Since love is blind, then from the mind, all womankind should rout 'em,
But, ladies, you must answer too, what would we do without 'em?
Still, I hate men!

V. Cole Porter, "I Love Paris" (1953)

I love Paris in the springtime.
 I love Paris in the fall.
 I love Paris in the winter, when it drizzles.
 I love Paris in the summer, when it sizzles.

I love Paris every moment,
 Every moment of the year.
 I love Paris. Why, oh, why, do I love Paris?
 Because my love is near.

VI. Stephen Sondheim, "Who's That Woman?" (1971)

Who's that woman? I know her well,
 All decked out head to toe.
 She lives life like a carousel,
 Beau after beau after beau.
 Nightly, daily,
 Always laughing gaily,
 Seems I see her everywhere I go.
 Oh—

Who's that woman?
 I know I know that woman.
 So clever
 But ever
 So sad.
 Love, she said, was a fad.

The kind of love that she couldn't make fun of,
 She'd have none of.

Who's that woman?
 That cheery, weary woman
 Who's dressing for yet one more spree?
 Each day I see her pass
 In my looking glass—
 Lord, Lord, Lord, that woman is me!

VII. Stephen Sondheim, "Green Finch and Linnet Bird" (1979)

Green finch and linnet bird,
 Nightingale, blackbird,
 How is it you sing?
 How can you jubilate,
 Sitting in cages,
 Never taking wing?

Outside the sky waits,
 Beckoning, beckoning,
 Just beyond the bars.
 How can you remain,
 Staring at the rain,
 Maddened by the stars?
 How is it you sing
 Anything?
 How is it you sing?

Green finch and linnet bird,
Nightingale, blackbird,
How is it you sing?
Whence comes this melody constantly flowing?
Is it rejoicing or merely halloing?
Are you discussing
Or fussing
Or simply dreaming?
Are you crowing?
Are you screaming?

Ring dove and robinet,
Is it for wages,
Singing to be sold?
Have you decided it's
Safer in cages,
Singing when you're told?

My cage has many rooms,
Damask and dark.
Nothing there sings,
Not even my lark.
Larks never will, you know,
When they're captive.
Teach me to be more adaptive.

Green finch and linnet bird,
Nightingale, blackbird,
Teach me how to sing.
If I cannot fly,
Let me sing.

VIII. Toni Morrison, "It Comes Unadorned" (2002)

It comes
Unadorned
Like a phrase
Strong enough to cast a spell;
It comes
Unbidden,
Like the turn of sun through hills
Or stars in wheels of song.
The jeweled feet of women dance the earth.
Arousing it to spring.
Shoulders broad as a road bend to share the weight of years.
Profiles breach the distance and lean
Toward an ordinary kiss.
Bliss.
It comes naked into the world like a charm.