

Student-generated list of poems referred to in *The Invention of Love*:

Horace, Ode iii 30  
(trans. David Ferry)

Today I have finished a work outlasting bronze  
And the pyramids of ancient royal kings.  
The North Wind raging cannot scatter it  
Nor can the rain obliterate this work,  
Nor can the years, nor can the ages passing.  
Some part of me will live and not be given  
Over into the hands of the death goddess.  
I will go on and on, kept ever young  
By the praise in times to come for what I have done

Catullus 11

Furius and Aurelius, companions of Catullus,  
whether he penetrates the furthest of the Indies,  
or the shore where the beating of the eastern  
waves resonates far and wide,

whether he penetrates into the Hyrcanos or the gentle  
Arabs,  
or the arrow-carrying Parthians,  
or the water which colors the delta of  
the Nile colors,

whether he will go across the great Alps,  
intending to see the great monument to Caesar,  
or the Gallic Rhine or the horribly distant Britain,

you who are prepared to try all these things,  
and whatever else the will of the gods will bring,  
announce to my girl a few  
nasty words.

Let her live and let her flourish with her adulterers,  
whom having embraced 300 of them at the same time,  
she owns and keeps them,  
truly loving none of them, but repeatedly breaking the  
groins of  
all of them;

nor, let her respect my love as she did before,

which by her fault, has fallen,  
just like the farthest flower of the field  
has been killed by a passing plow.

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Mathew Arnold, Memorial Verses

Goethe in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,  
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.  
But one such death remain'd to come;  
The last poetic voice is dumb--  
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,  
We bow'd our head and held our breath.  
He taught us little; but our soul  
Had felt him like the thunder's roll.  
With shivering heart the strife we saw  
Of passion with eternal law;  
And yet with reverential awe  
We watch'd the fount of fiery life  
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said:  
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.  
Physician of the iron age,  
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.  
He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear;  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said: Thou ailest here, and here!

He look'd on Europe's dying hour  
Of fitful dream and feverish power;  
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,  
The turmoil of expiring life--  
He said: The end is everywhere,  
Art still has truth, take refuge there!  
And he was happy, if to know  
Causes of things, and far below  
His feet to see the lurid flow  
Of terror, and insane distress,  
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth!--Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!  
For never has such soothing voice  
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,  
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade  
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come  
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.  
Wordsworth has gone from us--and ye,  
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!  
He too upon a wintry clime  
Had fallen--on this iron time  
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.  
He found us when the age had bound  
Our souls in its benumbing round;  
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.  
He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth,  
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;

The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;  
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.  
Our youth return'd; for there was shed  
On spirits that had long been dead,  
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,  
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light  
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,  
Time may restore us in his course  
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;  
But where will Europe's latter hour  
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?  
Others will teach us how to dare,  
And against fear our breast to steel;  
Others will strengthen us to bear--  
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?  
The cloud of mortal destiny,  
Others will front it fearlessly--  
But who, like him, will put it by?

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,  
O Rotha, with thy living wave!  
Sing him thy best! for few or none  
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

Diffugere nives: Horace's Odes, book 4, number 7, as translated by A. E. Housman:

The snows are fled away, leaves on the shaws

And grasses in the mead renew their birth,  
The river to the river-bed withdraws,  
And altered is the fashion of the earth.

The Nymphs and Graces three put off their fear

And unapparelled in the woodland play.  
The swift hour and the brief prime of the year  
Say to the soul, Thou wast not born for aye.

Thaw follows frost; hard on the heel of spring

treads summer sure to die, for hard on hers  
Comes autumn, with his apples scattering;  
Then back to wintertide, when nothing stirs.

But oh, whate'er the sky-led seasons mar,

Moon upon moon rebuilds it with her beams:  
Come we where Tullus and where Ancus are,  
And good Aeneas, we are dust and dreams.

Torquatus, if the gods in heaven shall add

The morrow to the day, what tongue has told?  
Feast then thy heart, for what thy heart has had  
The fingers of no heir will ever hold.

When thou descendest once the shades among,

the stern assize and equal judgment o'er,  
Not thy long lineage nor thy golden tongue,  
No, nor thy righteousness, shall friend thee more.

Night holds Hippolytus the pure of stain,

Diana steads him nothing, he must stay;  
And Theseus leaves Pirithous in the chain  
The love of comrades cannot take away.

Catullus 99, Credits to Christopher Bradley

I stole from you, while you were playing, honey-sweet  
Juventius,  
a kiss more sweet than sweet ambrosia.  
But I did not get away with it: for such a long hour  
I remember being crucified on the greatest cross,  
and then I apologized to you, but I was not able to  
remove  
with any tears even a little of your ferocity.  
For at the same time it was done, you wiped clean  
your lips, bathed by many tears, with all your fingers,  
nor did anything remained received from my face,  
just as if it were the filthy spit of a filthy prostitute.  
Besides this, you did not hold back from making me  
miserable,  
troubled by love, and tormented in every way,  
so that to me that kiss changed from ambrosia  
to a bitterer thing than a bitter herb.  
Because you put forth such a punishment for miserable  
love,  
never will I after this steal a kiss.

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"The Day of Battle", from A Shropshire Lad by A. E. Housman

'Far I hear the bugle blow  
To call me where I would not got,  
And the guns begin the son,  
'Soldier, fly or stay for long."

'Comrade, if to turn and fly  
Made a soldier never die,  
Fly I would, for who would not?  
'Tis sure no pleasure to be shot.

'But since the man that runs away  
Lives to die another day,  
And cowards' funerals, when they come,  
Are not wept so well at home,

‘Therefore, though the best is bad,  
Stand and do the best, my lad;  
Stand and fight and see your slain,  
And take the bullet in your brain.’

Intermissa, Venus  
By Horace  
(Odes iv 1, translated by David Ferry)

Venus, it seems that now  
Your wars are starting again.  
Spare me, spare, I pray.  
I am not what I was

When tender Cynara ruled me  
Spare me, O pitiless mother  
Of all the amorini,  
For I am almost fifty.

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Now neither boys nor girls  
Delight me anymore,  
Nor credulous hopes of love,  
Nor drinking bouts nor garlands  
Woven of new spring flowers.

But why, Ligurinus, why,  
Every once in a while  
Do my eyes fill up with tears?  
Why sometimes when I’m talking  
Do I suddenly fall silent?  
I hold you fast, sometimes,  
Sometimes, at night, in a dream,  
Or I follow you as you flee  
Across the Campus Martius  
O hard of heart, Ligurinus,  
Or as you are lost among  
The bewildering waves of the river.

"To the Virgins, to make much of time"  
by Robert Herrick

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old time is still a-flying :  
And this same flower that smiles to-day  
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,  
The higher he's a-getting,  
The sooner will his race be run,  
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,  
When youth and blood are warmer ;  
But being spent, the worse, and worst  
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,  
And while ye may go marry :  
For having lost but once your prime  
You may forever tarry.

Source:  
Herrick, Robert. Works of Robert Herrick. vol I.  
Alfred Pollard, ed.  
London, Lawrence & Bullen, 1891. 102.

Andrew Marvel, "To His Coy Mistress"

Had we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down and think which way  
To walk, and pass our long love's day;  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the Flood;  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow.  
An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long preserv'd virginity,  
And your quaint honour turn to dust,  
And into ashes all my lust.  
The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may;  
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour,  
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.  
Let us roll all our strength, and all  
Our sweetness, up into one ball;  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Thorough the iron gates of life.  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

From A. E. Housman Complete Poems: Additional Poems XVIII

Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrists?  
And what has he been after that they groan and shake their fists?  
And wherefore is he wearing such a conscience-stricken air?  
Oh they're taking him to prison for the color of his hair.

'Tis a shame to human nature, such a head of hair as his;



In the good old time 'twas hanging for the color that it is;  
Though hanging isn't bad enough and flaying would be fair  
For the nameless and abominable color of his hair.

Oh a deal of pains he's taken and a pretty price he's paid  
To hide his poll or dye it of a mentionable shade;  
But they've pulled the beggar's hat off for the world to see and stare,  
And they're haling him to justice for the color of his hair.

Now 'tis oakum for his fingers and the treadmill for his feet  
And the quarry-gang on Portland in the cold and in the heat,  
And between his spells of labor in the time he has to spare  
He can curse the God that made him for the color of his hair.

From A Shropshire Lad, Poem 44 by A. E. Housman

Shot? So quick, so clean an ending?  
Oh that was right, lad, that was brave:  
Yours was not an ill for mending,  
'Twas best to take it to the grave.

Oh you had forethought, you could reason,  
And saw your road and where it led,  
And early wise and brave in season  
Put the pistol to your head.

Oh soon, and better so than later  
After long disgrace and scorn,  
You shot dead the household traitor,  
The soul that should not have been born.

Right you guessed the rising morrow  
And scorned to tread the mire you must:  
Dust's your wages, son of sorrow,  
But men may come to worse than dust.

Souls undone, undoing others, —  
Long time since the tale began.  
You would not live to wrong your brothers:  
Oh lad, you died as fits a man.

Now to your grave shall friend and stranger  
With ruth and some with envy come:  
Undishonoured, clear of danger,

Clean of guilt, pass hence and home.

Turn safe to rest, no dreams, no waking;  
And here, man, here's the wreath I've made:  
'Tis not a gift that's worth the taking,  
But wear it and it will not fade.