

# CORNCRAKE



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ISSUE 14

Mark Twain

Emily Bronte

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Theodore Shaw-Taylor

AR Duncan

Nick Winney

Shieldmaiden

Nathan CJ Hood

The Wolves of God  
Algernon Blackwood

TEARING INTO THE NEST  
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE



# Nathan Hood hosts The Merry Corncrakes Podcast

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"Not the bee upon the blossom,  
In the pride o' sunny noon;  
Not the little sporting fairy,  
All beneath the simmer moon;  
Not the poet, in the moment  
Fancy lightens in his e'e,  
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture,  
That thy presence gi'es to me."  
— Robert Burns

# Editor's Note



Why hello there. Back again are we? Excellent. A plump and delicious mag here for you this month. Most importantly, King Arthur Day falls on the 17th (you know this is true cause it's in the Corncrake and the Corncrake never lies), and we have a write-up of King Arthur and his importance. Saint George, patron saint of England, has his day this month as well.

Our county of the month is Berkshire, and along with a list of the important dates for this month, we have a great start to this juicy issue.

Algernon Blackwood rises from the grave to grace this issue with *The Wolves of God*, a delightful tale if the mag's cover image is anything to go by.

New contributor Nick Winney has presented a tale of the trees with *God of the Wild*, and my good self presents *Plantiflora the Saltie*. AR Duncan's *Eagles Flight* is now on part 4, but the next installment of AR Green's *A Song of Spring* will be in the next issue.

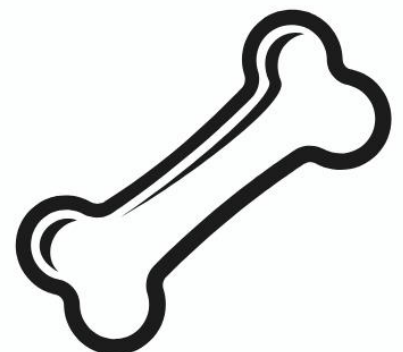
Some great writers of the past who can be found within are Nathaniel Hawthorne with *Dr Heidegger's Experiment*, Mark Twain with *A Dog's Tale*, and some poetry by Emily Bronte to conclude.

The artist this month is Theodore Shaw-Taylor, sharing with us select pieces from his astonishingly varied body of work.

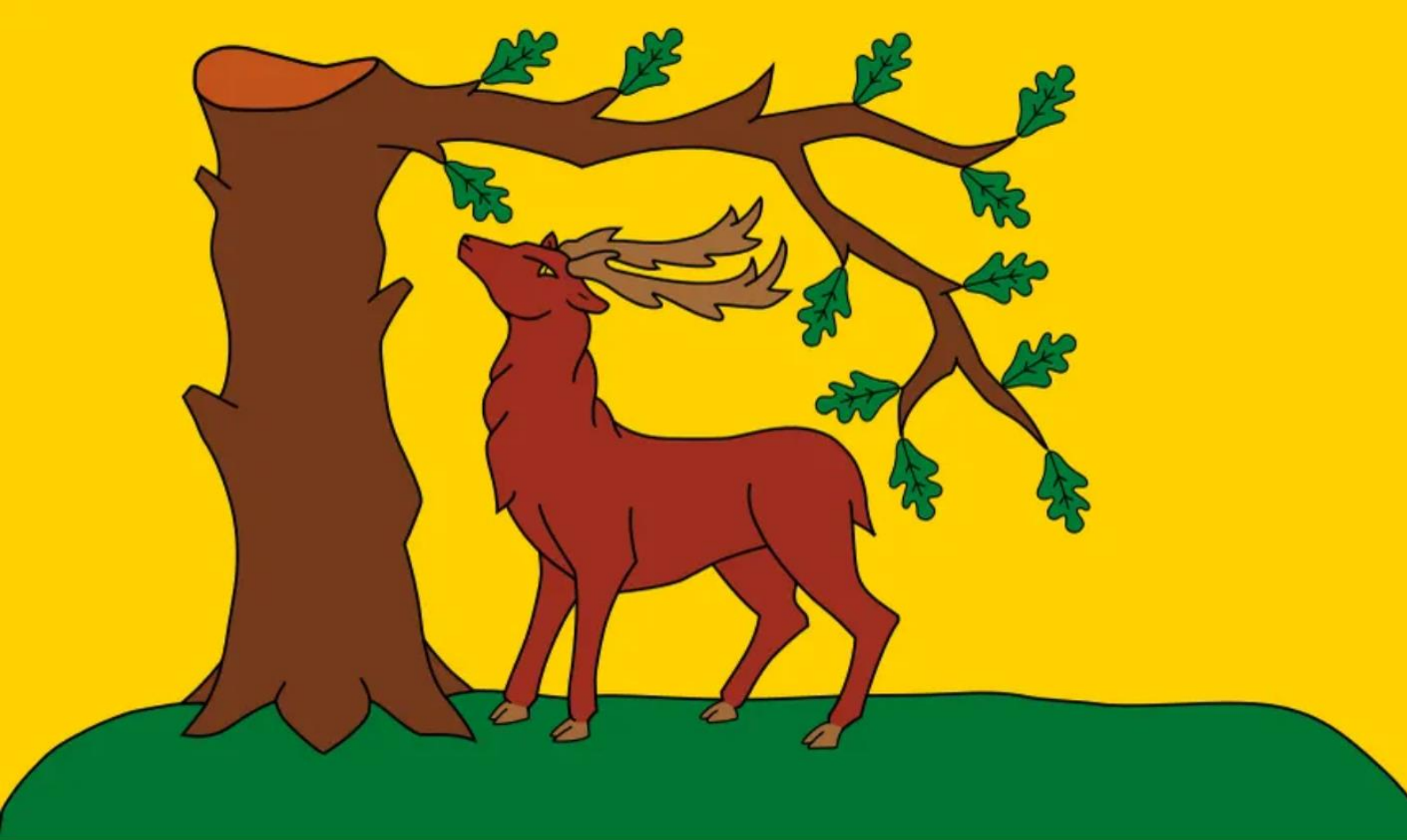
There are a few images from *The Pageant*, vol 1, included. This is a long out of print magazine from 1896, and a short story from an 1895 mag *Evergreen Spirit*.

## Call of the Shieldmaiden Editor-in-Chief

"Advance our standards, set upon our foes; Our  
ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,  
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!"  
*Richard III* by William Shakespeare







Berkshire's northern border runs for more than 100 miles along the south bank of the Thames. It stretches from Windsor to the borders of Gloucestershire. The River Thames provides, apart from the northern border, fertile farmland. In the west are the Berkshire Downs, rising to about 1,000 feet. From them is much beautiful and wooded river scenery down to Reading. The prehistoric Ridgeway runs along the Berkshire Downs, above the Vale of the White Horse, named from the ancient White Horse of Uffington, the major landmark carved into the scarp slope of the Berkshire Downs. Beside the horse being St George's Mound, where he slew the dragon. The main town is Reading, though historically the county town is Abingdon, and the Shire Hall in Abingdon is one of the earliest and finest of the seventeenth-century public halls. Windsor is the Queen's main residence outside London. This jewel of a town is dominated by Windsor Castle, the largest castle in Britain and indeed the largest inhabited castle in the world. The main Towns are Abingdon, Didcot, Harwell, Hungerford, Maidenhead, Newbury, Reading, Wantage, Windsor. The main Rivers are Thames, Kennet, Blackwater, Lamborn, Ock, Lodden. Highlights: White Horse and Maiden Castle, Uffington; Windsor Castle and Great Park; Warfield St Michael's church. Flower: Summer Snowflake

# BERKSHIRE

The flag of Berkshire features the traditional hart (stag) and oak theme associated with the county for several centuries. Berkshire's traditional hart and oak refer generally to the forestlands of Berkshire and specifically to the legend of a late 14th century royal huntsman named Herne The Hunter, whom legend holds hanged himself from an oak tree after being ejected from the King's service as a result of machinations by jealous rivals. The tale states that the tree was subsequently struck by lightning. The hart (stag) is "one of the manifestations of his restless spirit" and, according to Michael Drayton's poem of 1627, a banner with this badge, or something very like it, was carried by the men of Berkshire at the Battle of Agincourt "Barkshire a Stag, vnder an Oake that stood,".



# Dates of Importance

The exact origins of **April Fools' Day** in England are unclear, but some historians suggest that it may have been celebrated since the beginning of the 19th century. One theory links the tradition to a story in Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" from 1392, where a vain cock is tricked by a fox on the 32nd day from March 1, which is **April 1**. However, it is debated whether Chaucer was actually referring to April 1 or if the text is simply confusing.

**Holy Week** begins on the 13th April. It is uncertain when Christians first began to make an annual (as opposed to weekly) memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. This was at first a night-long vigil, followed by the celebration of the Eucharist at cock-crow, and all the great themes of redemption were included within it: incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, glorification. Over time, it developed into the articulated structure of Holy Week and Easter. Through participation in the whole sequence of services, the Christian shares in Christ's own journey, from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the empty tomb on Easter morning. The procession with palms, which was already observed in Jerusalem in the 4th cent, is accompanied by the reading or singing of the Passion Narrative, in which the whole story of the week is anticipated. Maundy Thursday (from *mandatum*, 'commandment', because of the use of John 13.34 in the Antiphon) contains a rich complex of themes: humble Christian service expressed through Christ's washing of his disciples' feet, the institution of the Eucharist, the perfection of Christ's loving obedience through the agony of Gethsemane. After keeping vigil ('Could you not watch with me one hour?') Thursday passes into Good Friday with its two characteristic episodes. The veneration of the Cross is older; the sequence of meditations and music known as the Three Hours' Devotion was introduced into the CfE in the 19th cent. The first is now sometimes incorporated into the structure of the second. It is a widespread custom for there not to be a celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday, but for the consecrated bread and wine remaining from the Maundy Thursday Eucharist to be given in communion. The church remains stripped of all decoration. It continues bare and empty through the following day, which is a day without a liturgy: there can be no adequate way of recalling the being dead of the Son of God, other than silence and desolation. But within the silence there grows a sense of peace and completion, and then rising excitement as the Easter Vigil draws near. This 'Week of Weeks' preserves some of the oldest texts still in current use, and rehearses the deepest and most fundamental Christian memories.

**Maundy Thursday 17th April**, is a solemn Christian feast that marks the beginning of the Paschal Triduum and commemorates the Washing of the Feet and the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his Apostles. It is observed on the Thursday before Easter. The name "Maundy" comes from the Latin word "*mandatum*," or commandment, reflecting Jesus' words "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you". During Maundy Thursday services, many churches celebrate with a ceremonial washing of feet, symbolizing Jesus washing the feet of his disciples as an act of humility and service. This day also initiates the Easter Triduum, which includes Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and ends on the evening of Easter Sunday. In England, the Royal Maundy service involves the monarch offering "alms" to deserving senior citizens—one man and one woman for each year of the sovereign's age. These coins, known as Maundy money or Royal Maundy, are distributed in red and white purses, with the red purse containing regular currency and the white purse having money in the amount of one penny for each year of the Sovereign's age.

**King Arthur Day** is not an official date but is held on **17th April**. He is important to England as a legendary figure who has been central to English folklore and literature for centuries. He was a great and noble king who defended Britain against invaders, particularly the Saxons, and is linked to the idea of chivalry and the Round Table. This legend has been used to symbolize British unity and resilience. The legend of King Arthur has been used to legitimize British rule and national identity, with some historical figures, such as Henry VII, even claiming descent from Arthur. Arthur's story has also been a source of national pride and a symbol of British resistance against foreign invaders, reinforcing a sense of historical continuity and cultural identity. Furthermore, the legend of King Arthur has been instrumental in shaping medieval and Renaissance literature and art, influencing the development of the concept of chivalry and the ideal of the noble knight. This has had a lasting impact on English culture and continues to be a significant part of the country's historical and literary legacy.



**Good Friday** is on the **18th April** and is a bank holiday that commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is observed as a day of solemn reflection and religious observance. In London, thousands of people gather in Trafalgar Square to watch a passion play depicting the crucifixion, and churches around the country are often draped in black for processions and services. Traditionally, hot cross buns are enjoyed on this day, symbolizing the religious significance of Good Friday. Hot cross buns are a popular treat during the Easter season, symbolizing the religious significance of the day.

**Easter Sunday.** Holy week ends **20th April** and is also known as Resurrection Sunday. It is a Christian festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as described in the New Testament. It marks the culmination of the Passion of Jesus, which includes his crucifixion and burial by the Romans at Calvary around 30 AD. Easter Sunday celebrates Jesus rising from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, a central tenet of Christian faith. The holiday is observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox, with its date varying between March 22 and April 25. For Christians, Easter Sunday is the holiest day of the year, following a period of fasting and prayer known as Lent, which lasts for 40 days and is observed in memory of Jesus' 40-day fast in the desert. The week leading up to Easter Sunday is known as Holy Week, which includes significant days such as Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The name "Easter" may have originated from Eostre, an Anglo-Saxon goddess, and the holiday's timing coincides with some pagan celebrations, although the Christian celebration focuses on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Easter Monday** is the day after Easter Sunday and marks the second day of Eastertide in Christian traditions. It celebrates the continuation of Easter festivities and is a public holiday in many countries. In the Catholic Church, Easter Monday is also known as "Monday of the Angel," and the Church prays the Regina Caeli instead of the Angelus at the noon hour on this day.

**Saint Anselm's Day** is **April 21**. Known as St Anselm of Canterbury, he was highly relevant to England due to his role as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109. He defended the church's interests in England amid the Investiture Controversy, which was a significant conflict between the church and the monarchy over who had the authority to appoint bishops and abbots. Anselm's principled opposition to royal prerogatives over the Catholic Church led to his exile from England twice, once from 1097 to 1100 and then from 1105 to 1107. During his tenure, Anselm worked to strengthen the rights of the church against the king. For instance, he helped guide the Greek Catholic bishops of southern Italy to adopt Roman Rites at the Council of Bari and worked for the primacy of Canterbury over the Archbishop of York and over the bishops of Wales. Anselm's vision was of a Catholic Church with its own internal authority, which clashed with William II's desire for royal control over both church and state. His efforts to reform and protect the interests of Canterbury often put him at odds with the English monarchy, leading to his exiles and contributing to the ongoing Investiture Controversy. Thus, Saint Anselm's contributions significantly influenced the religious and political landscape of England during the Middle Ages.

**Saint George's day** is on **23 April**, he is the patron saint of England, was recognized as such following the establishment of the Order of the Garter by King Edward III in 1348, replacing earlier patron saints like St Edmund and St Edward the Confessor. He is celebrated for his status as a symbol of piety, chivalry, and bravery, and his feast day is traditionally marked on April 23, the date of his martyrdom. Saint George is often depicted as a crusader knight, wearing armor and riding a white horse, and is known for the legend of slaying a dragon. His cross, a red cross on a white background, forms part of the national flag of England and is also incorporated into the Union Flag of the United Kingdom.

**St. Catherine of Siena** (April 29) was a Dominican tertiary, mystic, and doctor of the Church who lived from 1347 to 1380. She was born in Siena, Italy, during the outbreak of the plague and was the 23rd or 24th child of her parents, Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa. Catherine is known for her holiness, severe asceticism, and her extensive writings, including about 380 letters, 26 prayers, and the 4 treatises of her famous work, The Dialogue. She is also recognized for her role in persuading the Pope to return to Rome from Avignon and for her involvement in promoting church reform and peace in Italy. St. Catherine was declared a doctor of the Church in 1970 and a patron saint of Europe in 1999. She died at the young age of 33 in Rome, and most of her body is buried at Santa Maria sopra Minerva basilica in Rome, while her mummified head is in a reliquary near her thumb in the church of St. Dominic in Siena.



# King Arthur

By Nathan CJ Hood

King Arthur is a figure prominent in history and literature. Many of us will have heard of him and the resplendent castle of Camelot. There he, with his sword Excalibur, and his knights hold court together at the magnificent Round Table. From there they ride forth to administer justice across the land, overturning wicked barons, rescuing damsels in distress and slaying terrifying monsters. Some are even called to pursue the Holy Grail, a vessel imbued with magical and supernatural power. Amidst these heroics is the forbidden romance of Lancelot and Guinevere, the Lady and her Knight pursuing a love that threatens to break a kingdom. Arthur's fall at the hands of his nephew leads to his departure for the mysterious Island of Avalon. He will return in Britain's darkest hour to save the land once more.

Much of what has been described above is the result of a vast literary, oral and artistic tradition that spans over 1000 years. The earliest references to Arthur emerge from the remnants of the Celtic Britons, preserved by the Welsh and Breton peoples. He is a warlord, a pirate, a battler of giants. The histories tell us that he led the resistance to the Anglo-Saxon invasions in the late 6th century, but little more is known about him. It is in the 1100s that the development of the Arthurian legends takes off. Inspired by Celtic tales and the songs of the Breton troubadours, Geoffrey of Monmouth, a monk writing in the 1130s, wrote a monumental text: *The History of the Kings of Britain*. This told the tale from Britain's mythical foundation by Brutus of Troy and gave a historical narrative depicting King Arthur and his knights, the framework upon which later texts would add to the story. Geoffrey's story was hugely popular, with hundreds of manuscripts circulating around Europe and the Mediterranean.

The birth of Arthurian history and romance coincided with the rise of the Plantagenet Kings of England, the Anglo-Norman descendants of William the Conqueror. They modelled themselves upon and elevated the tales of Arthur and his Round Table. Like Arthur, Henry II unified Britain, conquered vast swathes of France, and established the rule of law in the land. He was told by one singer that Arthur was buried at Glastonbury Abbey. In the 1190s, the monks of Glastonbury set to work digging for Arthur's grave. Credible accounts suggest that they did find a tree-trunk coffin (the practice of the ancient Celts) containing a giant man and a blonde-haired woman, whom they readily identified as Arthur and Guinevere. Around the same time, Richard I, son of Henry II, led the Third Crusade wielding a sword believed to be Excalibur, Arthur's famous blade. Edward I and his grandson Edward III styled themselves in the mould of Arthur. They held round table feasts, engaged in chivalric practices and even, in the case of the latter, established new knightly orders – The Order of the Garter. Arthur was the perfect archetype for Plantagenet sovereignty.

Yet Arthur's legends have transcended their historical origins. In reaction to the industrial revolution and development of imperial capitalism, many 19th century

poets and painters turned to the stories of Camelot to rediscover the deep magic of Britain. Tennyson produced his famous *Idylls of the King*, which has become a definitive account of Arthur's adventures. Pre-Raphaelite artists like Rossetti, Morris and Burne Jones found a spark of human emotion, natural beauty and powerful significance within the tales, bringing them to life in paint and tapestry. Even in the 20th century Arthur has continued to make his presence known. The 60s and 70s both mocked and mourned for the passing of a prior age, with films like *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *Excalibur* tapping into these feelings of loss and remembrance.

Arthur has many faces, but throughout the tradition he is held as the pinnacle and ideal of British kingship. He is the model of faith, honour, justice, strength and righteousness, which makes his fall all the more tragic. And yet, his tragedy is a key aspect of why we celebrate him. For he established a golden age, and while that had to end as all things do, it was nonetheless worthy of remembrance. It was by his hand that the monsters were kept at bay; it was by his hand that peace was maintained; it was by his hand that the greatest stories of the medieval world were told. He is the heart of all that is good in the British Isles, and we would do well to seek out the riches he brings forth from his store. For from his legend new life will emerge once more.





# Saint George

## By Nathan CJ Hood

On 23rd April England celebrates St George. Edward III made him England's patron saint in 1348 when he established the Order of the Garter. As the exemplar of chivalry, he was the ideal representative for the new order. He was closely tied to the crusaders, his cross borne upon their flags and shields as they battled against Islamic armies. His story is the classic knight's tale: battling a fearsome dragon, rescuing a damsel in distress and saving a people from ruin. His exploits are recorded in the Golden Legend, a 13th century collection of saints lives that was popular in medieval Christendom.

St. George was a knight and born in Cappadocia. On a time he came into the province of Libya, to a city which is said Silene. And by this city was a stagne or a pond like a sea, wherein was a dragon which envenomed all the country. And on a time the people were assembled for to slay him, and when they saw him they fled. And when he came nigh the city he venomed the people with his breath, and therefore the people of the city gave to him every day two sheep for to feed him, because he should do no harm to the people, and when the sheep failed there was taken a man and a sheep.

Then was an ordinance made in the town that there should be taken the children and young people of them of the town by lot, and every each one as it fell, were he gentle or poor, should be delivered when the lot fell on him or her. So it happed that many of them of the town were then delivered, insomuch that the lot fell upon the king's daughter, whereof the king was sorry, and said unto the people: For the love of the gods take gold and silver and all that I have, and let me have my daughter.

They said: How sir! ye have made and ordained the law, and our children be now dead, and ye would do the contrary. Your daughter shall be given, or else we shall burn you and your house.

When the king saw he might no more do, he began to weep, and said to his daughter: Now shall I never see thine espousals.

Then returned he to the people and demanded eight days' respite, and they granted it to him. And when the eight days were passed they came to him and said: Thou seest that the city perisheth.

Then did the king do array his daughter like as she should be wedded, and embraced her, kissed her and gave her his benediction, and after led her to the place where the dragon was.

When she was there St. George passed by, and when he saw the lady he demanded the lady what she made there and she said: Go ye your way fair young man, that ye perish not also.

Then said he: Tell to me what have ye and why weep ye, and doubt ye of nothing.

When she saw that he would know, she said to him how she was delivered to the dragon. Then said St. George: Fair daughter, doubt ye nothing hereof for I shall help thee in the name of Jesu Christ.

She said: For God's sake, good knight, go your way, and abide not with me, for ye may not deliver me.

Thus as they spake together the dragon appeared and came running to them, and St. George was upon his horse, and drew out his sword and garnished him with the sign of the cross, and rode hardily against the dragon which came towards him, and smote him with his spear and hurt him sore and threw him to the ground. And after said to the maid: Deliver to me your girdle, and bind it about the neck of the dragon and be not afraid.

When she had done so the dragon followed her as it had been a meek beast and debonair. Then she led him into the city, and the people fled by mountains and valleys, and said: Alas! alas! we shall be all dead.

Then St. George said to them: Ne doubt ye nothing, without more, believe ye in God, Jesu Christ, and do ye to be baptized and I shall slay the dragon.

Then the king was baptized and all his people, and St. George slew the dragon and smote off his head, and commanded that he should be thrown in the fields, and they took four carts with oxen that drew him out of the city.

Then were there well fifteen thousand men baptized, without women and children, and the king did do make a church there of our Lady and of St. George, in the which yet sourdeth a fountain of living water, which healeth sick people that drink thereof. After this the king offered to St. George as much money as there might be numbered, but he refused all and commanded that it should be given to poor people for God's sake; and enjoined the king four things, that is, that he should have charge of the churches, and that he should honour the priests and hear their service diligently, and that he should have pity on the poor people, and after, kissed the king and departe



# The Wolves of God

Algernon Blackwood





As the little steamer entered the bay of Kettletoft in the Orkneys the beach at Sanday appeared so low that the houses almost seemed to be standing in the water; and to the big, dark man leaning over the rail of the upper deck the sight of them came with a pang of mingled pain and pleasure. The scene, to his eyes, had not changed. The houses, the low shore, the flat treeless country beyond, the vast open sky, all looked exactly the same as when he left the island thirty years ago to work for the Hudson Bay Company in distant N. W. Canada. A lad of eighteen then, he was now a man of forty-eight, old for his years, and this was the home-coming he had so often dreamed about in the lonely wilderness of trees where he had spent his life. Yet his grim face wore an anxious rather than a tender expression. The return was perhaps not quite as he had pictured it.

Jim Peace had not done too badly, however, in the Company's service. For an islander, he would be a rich man now; he had not married, he had saved the greater part of his salary, and even in the far-away Post where he had spent so many years there had been occasional opportunities of the kind common to new, wild countries where life and law are in the making. He had not hesitated to take them. None of the big Company Posts, it was true, had come his way, nor had he risen very high in the service; in another two years his turn would have come, yet he had left of his own accord before those two years were up. His decision, judging by the strength in the features, was not due to impulse; the move had been deliberately weighed and calculated; he had renounced his opportunity after full reflection. A man with those steady eyes, with that square jaw and determined mouth, certainly did not act without good reason.

A curious expression now flickered over his weather-hardened face as he saw again his childhood's home, and the return, so often dreamed about, actually took place at last. An uneasy light flashed for a moment in the deep-set grey eyes, but was quickly gone again, and the tanned visage recovered its accustomed look of stern composure. His keen sight took in a dark knot of figures on the landing-pier—his brother, he knew, among them. A wave of home-sickness swept over him. He longed to see his brother again, the old farm, the sweep of open country, the sand-dunes, and the breaking seas. The smell of long-forgotten days came to his nostrils with its sweet, painful pang of youthful memories.

How fine, he thought, to be back there in the old familiar fields of childhood, with sea and sand about him instead of the smother of endless woods that ran a thousand miles without a break. He was glad in particular that no trees were visible, and that rabbits scampering among the dunes were the only wild animals he need ever meet....

Those thirty years in the woods, it seemed, oppressed his mind; the forests, the countless multitudes of trees, had wearied him. His nerves, perhaps, had suffered finally. Snow, frost and sun, stars, and the wind had been his companions during the long days and endless nights in his lonely Post, but chiefly—trees. Trees, trees, trees! On the whole, he had preferred them in stormy weather,

though, in another way, their rigid hosts, 'mid the deep silence of still days, had been equally oppressive. In the clear sunlight of a windless day they assumed a waiting, listening, watching aspect that had something spectral in it, but when in motion—well, he preferred a moving animal to one that stood stock-still and stared. Wind, moreover, in a million trees, even the lightest breeze, drowned all other sounds—the howling of the wolves, for instance, in winter, or the ceaseless harsh barking of the husky dogs he so disliked.

Even on this warm September afternoon a slight shiver ran over him as the background of dead years loomed up behind the present scene. He thrust the picture back, deep down inside himself. The self-control, the strong, even violent will that the face betrayed, came into operation instantly. The background was background; it belonged to what was past, and the past was over and done with. It was dead. Jim meant it to stay dead.

The figure waving to him from the pier was his brother. He knew Tom instantly; the years had dealt easily with him in this quiet island; there was no startling, no unkindly change, and a deep emotion, though unexpressed, rose in his heart. It was good to be home again, he realized, as he sat presently in the cart, Tom holding the reins, driving slowly back to the farm at the north end of the island. Everything he found familiar, yet at the same time strange. They passed the school where he used to go as a little bare-legged boy; other boys were now learning their lessons exactly as he used to do. Through the open window he could hear the droning voice of the schoolmaster, who, though invisible, wore the face of Mr. Lovibond, his own teacher.

"Lovibond?" said Tom, in reply to his question. "Oh, he's been dead these twenty years. He went south, you know—Glasgow, I think it was, or Edinburgh. He got typhoid."

Stands of golden plover were to be seen as of old in the fields, or flashing overhead in swift flight with a whirl of wings, wheeling and turning together like one huge bird. Down on the empty shore a curlew cried. Its piercing note rose clear above the noisy clamour of the gulls. The sun played softly on the quiet sea, the air was keen but pleasant, the tang of salt mixed sweetly with the clean smells of open country that he knew so well. Nothing of essentials had changed, even the low clouds beyond the heaving uplands were the clouds of childhood.

They came presently to the sand-dunes, where rabbits sat at their burrow-mouths, or ran helter-skelter across the road in front of the slow cart.

"They're safe till the colder weather comes and trapping begins," he mentioned. It all came back to him in detail.

"And they know it, too—the canny little beggars," replied Tom. "Any rabbits out where you've been?" he asked casually.

"Not to hurt you," returned his brother shortly.

Nothing seemed changed, although everything seemed different. He looked upon the old, familiar things, but with other eyes. There were, of course,

changes, alterations, yet so slight, in a way so odd and curious, that they evaded him; not being of the physical order, they reported to his soul, not to his mind. But his soul, being troubled, sought to deny the changes; to admit them meant to admit a change in himself he had determined to conceal even if he could not entirely deny it.

"Same old place, Tom," came one of his rare remarks. "The years ain't done much to it." He looked into his brother's face a moment squarely. "Nor to you, either, Tom," he added, affection and tenderness just touching his voice and breaking through a natural reserve that was almost taciturnity.

His brother returned the look; and something in that instant passed between the two men, something of understanding that no words had hinted at, much less expressed. The tie was real, they loved each other, they were loyal, true, steadfast fellows. In youth they had known no secrets. The shadow that now passed and vanished left a vague trouble in both hearts.

"The forests," said Tom slowly, "have made a silent man of you, Jim. You'll miss them here, I'm thinking."

"Maybe," was the curt reply, "but I guess not."

His lips snapped to as though they were of steel and could never open again, while the tone he used made Tom realize that the subject was not one his brother cared to talk about particularly. He was surprised, therefore, when, after a pause, Jim returned to it of his own accord. He was sitting a little sideways as he spoke, taking in the scene with hungry eyes. "It's a queer thing," he observed, "to look round and see nothing but clean empty land, and not a single tree in sight. You see, it don't look natural quite."

Again his brother was struck by the tone of voice, but this time by something else as well he could not name. Jim was excusing himself, explaining. The manner, too, arrested him. And thirty years disappeared as though they had not been, for it was thus Jim acted as a boy when there was something unpleasant he had to say and wished to get it over. The tone, the gesture, the manner, all were there. He was edging up to something he wished to say, yet dared not utter.

"You've had enough of trees then?" Tom said sympathetically, trying to help, "and things?"

The instant the last two words were out he realized that they had been drawn from him instinctively, and that it was the anxiety of deep affection which had prompted them. He had guessed without knowing he had guessed, or rather, without intention or attempt to guess. Jim had a secret. Love's clairvoyance had discovered it, though not yet its hidden terms.

"I have——" began the other, then paused, evidently to choose his words with care. "I've had enough of trees." He was about to speak of something that his brother had unwittingly touched upon in his chance phrase, but instead of finding the words he sought, he gave a sudden start, his breath caught sharply. "What's that?" he exclaimed, jerking his body round so abruptly that Tom automatically pulled the reins. "What is it?"

"A dog barking," Tom answered, much surprised. "A farm dog barking. Why? What did you think it was?" he asked, as he flicked the horse to go on again. "You made me jump," he added, with a laugh. "You're used to huskies, ain't you?"

"It sounded so—not like a dog, I mean," came the slow explanation. "It's long since I heard a sheep-dog bark, I suppose it startled me."

"Oh, it's a dog all right," Tom assured him comfortingly, for his heart told him infallibly the kind of tone to use. And presently, too, he changed the subject in his blunt, honest fashion, knowing that, also, was the right and kindly thing to do. He pointed out the old farms as they drove along, his brother silent again, sitting stiff and rigid at his side. "And it's good to have you back, Jim, from those outlandish places. There are not too many of the family left now—just you and I, as a matter of fact."

"Just you and I," the other repeated gruffly, but in a sweetened tone that proved he appreciated the ready sympathy and tact. "We'll stick together, Tom, eh? Blood's thicker than water, ain't it? I've learnt that much, anyhow."

The voice had something gentle and appealing in it, something his brother heard now for the first time. An elbow nudged into his side, and Tom knew the gesture was not solely a sign of affection, but grew partly also from the comfort born of physical contact when the heart is anxious. The touch, like the last words, conveyed an appeal for help. Tom was so surprised he couldn't believe it quite.

Scared! Jim scared! The thought puzzled and afflicted him who knew his brother's character inside out, his courage, his presence of mind in danger, his resolution. Jim frightened seemed an impossibility, a contradiction in terms; he was the kind of man who did not know the meaning of fear, who shrank from nothing, whose spirits rose highest when things appeared most hopeless. It must, indeed, be an uncommon, even a terrible danger that could shake such nerves; yet Tom saw the signs and read them clearly. Explain them he could not, nor did he try. All he knew with certainty was that his brother, sitting now beside him in the cart, hid a secret terror in his heart. Sooner or later, in his own good time, he would share it with him.

He ascribed it, this simple Orkney farmer, to those thirty years of loneliness and exile in wild desolate places, without companionship, without the society of women, with only Indians, husky dogs, a few trappers or fur-dealers like himself, but none of the wholesome, natural influences that sweeten life within reach. Thirty years was a long, long time. He began planning schemes to help. Jim must see people as much as possible, and his mind ran quickly over the men and women available. In women the neighbourhood was not rich, but there were several men of the right sort who might be useful, good fellows all. There was John Rossiter, another old Hudson Bay man, who had been factor at Cartwright, Labrador, for many years, and had returned long ago to spend his last days in civilization. There was Sandy McKay, also back from a long spell of rubber-planting in Malay....



Tom was still busy making plans when they reached the old farm and presently sat down to their first meal together since that early breakfast thirty years ago before Jim caught the steamer that bore him off to exile—an exile that now returned him with nerves unstrung and a secret terror hidden in his heart.

"I'll ask no questions," he decided. "Jim will tell me in his own good time. And meanwhile, I'll get him to see as many folks as possible." He meant it too; yet not only for his brother's sake. Jim's terror was so vivid it had touched his own heart too.

"Ah, a man can open his lungs here and breathe!" exclaimed Jim, as the two came out after supper and stood before the house, gazing across the open country. He drew a deep breath as though to prove his assertion, exhaling with slow satisfaction again. "It's good to see a clear horizon and to know there's all that water between—between me and where I've been." He turned his face to watch the plover in the sky, then looked towards the distant shore-line where the sea was just visible in the long evening light. "There can't be too much water for me," he added, half to himself. "I guess they can't cross water—not that much water at any rate."

Tom stared, wondering uneasily what to make of it.

"At the trees again, Jim?" he said laughingly. He had overheard the last words, though spoken low, and thought it best not to ignore them altogether. To be natural was the right way, he believed, natural and cheery. To make a joke of anything unpleasant, he felt, was to make it less serious. "I've never seen a tree come across the Atlantic yet, except as a mast—dead," he added.

"I wasn't thinking of the trees just then," was the blunt reply, "but of—something else. The damned trees are nothing, though I hate the sight of 'em. Not of much account, anyway"—as though he compared them mentally with another thing. He puffed at his pipe, a moment.

"They certainly can't move," put in his brother, "nor swim either."

"Nor another thing," said Jim, his voice thick suddenly, but not with smoke, and his speech confused, though the idea in his mind was certainly clear as daylight. "Things can't hide behind 'em—can they?"

"Not much cover hereabouts, I admit," laughed Tom, though the look in his brother's eyes made his laughter as short as it sounded unnatural.

"That's so," agreed the other. "But what I meant was"—he threw out his chest, looked about him with an air of intense relief, drew in another deep breath, and again exhaled with satisfaction—"if there are no trees, there's no hiding."

It was the expression on the rugged, weathered face that sent the blood in a sudden gulping rush from his brother's heart. He had seen men frightened, seen men afraid before they were actually frightened; he had also seen men stiff with terror in the face both of natural and so-called supernatural things; but never in his life before had he seen the look of unearthly dread that now turned his brother's face as white as chalk and yet put the glow of fire in two haunted burning eyes.

Across the darkening landscape the sound of distant barking had floated to them on the evening wind.

"It's only a farm-dog barking." Yet it was Jim's deep, quiet voice that said it, one hand upon his brother's arm.

"That's all," replied Tom, ashamed that he had betrayed himself, and realizing with a shock of surprise that it was Jim who now played the rôle of comforter—a startling change in their relations. "Why, what did you think it was?"

He tried hard to speak naturally and easily, but his voice shook. So deep was the brothers' love and intimacy that they could not help but share.

Jim lowered his great head. "I thought," he whispered, his grey beard touching the other's cheek, "maybe it was the wolves"—an agony of terror made both voice and body tremble—"the Wolves of God!"

The interval of thirty years had been bridged easily enough; it was the secret that left the open gap neither of them cared or dared to cross. Jim's reason for hesitation lay within reach of guesswork, but Tom's silence was more complicated.

With strong, simple men, strangers to affectation or pretence, reserve is a real, almost a sacred thing. Jim offered nothing more; Tom asked no single question. In the latter's mind lay, for one thing, a singular intuitive certainty: that if he knew the truth he would lose his brother. How, why, wherefore, he had no notion; whether by death, or because, having told an awful thing, Jim would hide—physically or mentally—he knew not, nor even asked himself. No subtlety lay in Tom, the Orkney farmer. He merely felt that a knowledge of the truth involved separation which was death.

Day and night, however, that extraordinary phrase which, at its first hearing, had frozen his blood, ran on beating in his mind. With it came always the original, nameless horror that had held him motionless where he stood, his brother's bearded lips against his ear: *The Wolves of God*. In some dim way, he sometimes felt—tried to persuade himself, rather—the horror did not belong to the phrase alone, but was a sympathetic echo of what Jim felt himself. It had entered his own mind and heart. They had always shared in this same strange, intimate way. The deep brotherly tie accounted for it. Of the possible transference of thought and emotion he knew nothing, but this was what he meant perhaps.

At the same time he fought and strove to keep it out, not because it brought uneasy and distressing feelings to him, but because he did not wish to pry, to ascertain, to discover his brother's secret as by some kind of subterfuge that seemed too near to eavesdropping almost. Also, he wished most earnestly to protect him. Meanwhile, in spite of himself, or perhaps because of himself, he watched his brother as a wild animal watches its young. Jim was the only tie he had on earth. He loved him with a brother's love, and Jim, similarly, he knew, loved him. His job was difficult. Love alone could guide him.

He gave openings, but he never questioned:

"Your letter did surprise me, Jim. I was never so delighted in my life. You had still two years to run."

"I'd had enough," was the short reply. "God, man, it was good to get home again!"

This, and the blunt talk that followed their first meeting, was all Tom had to go upon, while those eyes that refused to shut watched ceaselessly always. There was improvement, unless, which never occurred to Tom, it was self-control; there was no more talk of trees and water, the barking of the dogs passed unnoticed, no reference to the loneliness of the backwoods life passed his lips; he spent his days fishing, shooting, helping with the work of the farm, his evenings smoking over a glass—he was more than temperate—and talking over the days of long ago.

The signs of uneasiness still were there, but they were negative, far more suggestive, therefore, than if open and direct. He desired no company, for instance—an unnatural thing, thought Tom, after so many years of loneliness.

It was this and the awkward fact that he had given up two years before his time was finished, renouncing, therefore, a comfortable pension—it was these two big details that stuck with such unkind persistence in his brother's thoughts. Behind both, moreover, ran ever the strange whispered phrase. What the words meant, or whence they were derived, Tom had no possible inkling. Like the wicked refrain of some forbidden song, they haunted him day and night, even his sleep not free from them entirely. All of which, to the simple Orkney farmer, was so new an experience that he knew not how to deal with it at all. Too strong to be flustered, he was at any rate bewildered. And it was for Jim, his brother, he suffered most.

What perplexed him chiefly, however, was the attitude his brother showed towards old John Rossiter. He could almost have imagined that the two men had met and known each other out in Canada, though Rossiter showed him how impossible that was, both in point of time and of geography as well. He had brought them together within the first few days, and Jim, silent, gloomy, morose, even surly, had eyed him like an enemy. Old Rossiter, the milk of human kindness as thick in his veins as cream, had taken no offence. Grizzled veteran of the wilds, he had served his full term with the Company and now enjoyed his well-earned pension. He was full of stories, reminiscences, adventures of every sort and kind; he knew men and values, had seen strange things that only the true wilderness delivers, and he loved nothing better than to tell them over a glass. He talked with Jim so genially and affably that little response was called for luckily, for Jim was glum and unresponsive almost to rudeness. Old Rossiter noticed nothing. What Tom noticed was, chiefly perhaps, his brother's acute uneasiness. Between his desire to help, his attachment to Rossiter, and his keen personal distress, he knew not what to do or say. The situation was becoming too much for him.

The two families, besides—Peace and Rossiter—had been neighbours for generations, had intermarried freely, and were related in various degrees. He was too fond of his brother to feel ashamed, but he was glad

when the visit was over and they were out of their host's house. Jim had even declined to drink with him.

"They're good fellows on the island," said Tom on their way home, "but not specially entertaining, perhaps. We all stick together though. You can trust 'em mostly."

"I never was a talker, Tom," came the gruff reply. "You know that." And Tom, understanding more than<sup>[13]</sup> he understood, accepted the apology and made generous allowances.

"John likes to talk," he helped him. "He appreciates a good listener."

"It's the kind of talk I'm finished with," was the rejoinder. "The Company and their goings-on don't interest me any more. I've had enough."

Tom noticed other things as well with those affectionate eyes of his that did not want to see yet would not close. As the days drew in, for instance, Jim seemed reluctant to leave the house towards evening. Once the full light of day had passed, he kept indoors. He was eager and ready enough to shoot in the early morning, no matter at what hour he had to get up, but he refused point blank to go with his brother to the lake for an evening flight. No excuse was offered; he simply declined to go.

The gap between them thus widened and deepened, while yet in another sense it grew less formidable. Both knew, that is, that a secret lay between them for the first time in their lives, yet both knew also that at the right and proper moment it would be revealed. Jim only waited till the proper moment came. And Tom understood. His deep, simple love was equal to all emergencies. He respected his brother's reserve. The obvious desire of John Rossiter to talk and ask questions, for instance, he resisted staunchly as far as he was able. Only when he could help and protect his brother did he yield a little. The talk was brief, even monosyllabic; neither the old Hudson Bay fellow nor the Orkney farmer ran to many words:

"He ain't right with himself," offered John, taking his pipe out of his mouth and leaning forward. "That's what I don't like to see." He put a skinny hand on Tom's knee, and looked earnestly into his face as he said it.

"Jim!" replied the other. "Jim ill, you mean!" It sounded ridiculous.

"His mind is sick."

"I don't understand," Tom said, though the truth bit like rough-edged steel into the brother's heart.

"His soul, then, if you like that better."

Tom fought with himself a moment, then asked him to be more explicit.

"More'n I can say," rejoined the laconic old backwoodsman. "I don't know myself. The woods heal some men and make others sick."

"Maybe, John, maybe." Tom fought back his resentment. "You've lived, like him, in lonely places. You ought to know." His mouth shut with a snap, as though he had said too much. Loyalty to his suffering brother caught him strongly. Already his heart ached for Jim. He felt angry with Rossiter for his divination, but perceived, too, that the old fellow meant well and was trying to help him. If he lost Jim, he lost the world—his all.



A considerable pause followed, during which both men puffed their pipes with reckless energy. Both, that is, were a bit excited. Yet both had their code, a code they would not exceed for worlds.

"Jim," added Tom presently, making an effort to meet the sympathy half way, "ain't quite up to the mark, I'll admit that."

There was another long pause, while Rossiter kept his eyes on his companion steadily, though without a trace of expression in them—a habit that the woods had taught him.

"Jim," he said at length, with an obvious effort, "is skeered. And it's the soul in him that's skeered."

Tom wavered dreadfully then. He saw that old Rossiter, experienced backwoodsman and taught by the Company as he was, knew where the secret lay, if he did not yet know its exact terms. It was easy enough to put the question, yet he hesitated, because loyalty forbade.

"It's a dirty outfit somewheres," the old man mumbled to himself.

Tom sprang to his feet, "If you talk that way," he exclaimed angrily, "you're no friend of mine—or his." His anger gained upon him as he said it. "Say that again," he cried, "and I'll knock your teeth—"

He sat back, stunned a moment.

"Forgive me, John," he faltered, shamed yet still angry. "It's pain to me, it's pain. Jim," he went on, after a long breath and a pull at his glass, "Jim is scared, I know it." He waited a moment, hunting for the words that he could use without disloyalty. "But it's nothing he's done himself," he said, "nothing to his discredit. I know *that*."

Old Rossiter looked up, a strange light in his eyes.

"No offence," he said quietly.

"Tell me what you know," cried Tom suddenly, standing up again.

The old factor met his eye squarely, steadfastly. He laid his pipe aside.

"D'ye really want to hear?" he asked in a lowered voice. "Because, if you don't—why, say so right now. I'm all for justice," he added, "and always was."

"Tell me," said Tom, his heart in his mouth. "Maybe, if I knew—I might help him." The old man's words woke fear in him. He well knew his passionate, remorseless sense of justice.

"Help him," repeated the other. "For a man skeered in his soul there ain't no help. But—if you want to hear—I'll tell you."

"Tell me," cried Tom. "I *will* help him," while rising anger fought back rising fear.

John took another pull at his glass.

"Jest between you and me like."

"Between you and me," said Tom. "Get on with it."

There was a deep silence in the little room. Only the sound of the sea came in, the wind behind it.

"The Wolves," whispered old Rossiter. "The Wolves of God."

Tom sat still in his chair, as though struck in the face. He shivered. He kept silent and the silence seemed to him long and curious. His heart was throbbing, the blood in his veins played strange tricks. All he remembered was that old Rossiter had gone on talking. The voice,

however, sounded far away and distant. It was all unreal, he felt, as he went homewards across the bleak, wind-swept upland, the sound of the sea for ever in his ears....

Yes, old John Rossiter, damned be his soul, had gone on talking. He had said wild, incredible things. Damned be his soul! His teeth should be smashed for that. It was outrageous, it was cowardly, it was not true.

"Jim," he thought, "my brother, Jim!" as he ploughed his way wearily against the wind. "I'll teach him. I'll teach him to spread such wicked tales!" He referred to Rossiter. "God blast these fellows! They come home from their outlandish places and think they can say anything! I'll knock his yellow dog's teeth...!"

While, inside, his heart went quailing, crying for help, afraid.

He tried hard to remember exactly what old John had said. Round Garden Lake—that's where Jim was located in his lonely Post—there was a tribe of Redskins. They were of unusual type. Malefactors among them—thieves, criminals, murderers—were not punished. They were merely turned out by the Tribe to die.

But how?

The Wolves of God took care of them. What were the Wolves of God?

A pack of wolves the Redskins held in awe, a sacred pack, a spirit pack—God curse the man! Absurd, outlandish nonsense! Superstitious humbug! A pack of wolves that punished malefactors, killing but never eating them. "Torn but not eaten," the words came back to him, "white men as well as red. They could even cross the sea...."

"He ought to be strung up for telling such wild yarns. By God—I'll teach him!"

"Jim! My brother, Jim! It's monstrous."

But the old man, in his passionate cold justice, had said a yet more terrible thing, a thing that Tom would never forget, as he never could forgive it: "You mustn't keep him here; you must send him away. We cannot have him on the island." And for that, though he could scarcely believe his ears, wondering afterwards whether he heard aright, for that, the proper answer to which was a blow in the mouth, Tom knew that his old friendship and affection had turned to bitter hatred.

"If I don't kill him, for that cursed lie, may God—and Jim—forgive me!"

It was a few days later that the storm caught the islands, making them tremble in their sea-born bed. The wind tearing over the treeless expanse was terrible, the lightning lit the skies. No such rain had ever been known. The building shook and trembled. It almost seemed the sea had burst her limits, and the waves poured in. Its fury and the noises that the wind made affected both the brothers, but Jim disliked the uproar most. It made him gloomy, silent, morose. It made him—Tom perceived it at once—uneasy. "Scared in his soul"—the ugly phrase came back to him.

"God save anyone who's out to-night," said Jim anxiously, as the old farm rattled about his head. Whereupon the door opened as of itself. There was no knock. It flew wide, as if the wind had burst it. Two drenched and beaten figures showed in the gap against

the lurid sky—old John Rossiter and Sandy. They laid their fowling pieces down and took off their capes; they had been up at the lake for the evening flight and six birds were in the game bag. So suddenly had the storm come up that they had been caught before they could get home.

And, while Tom welcomed them, looked after their creature wants, and made them feel at home as in duty bound, no visit, he felt at the same time, could have been less opportune. Sandy did not matter—Sandy never did matter anywhere, his personality being negligible—but John Rossiter was the last man Tom wished to see just then. He hated the man; hated that sense of implacable justice that he knew was in him; with the slightest excuse he would have turned him out and sent him on to his own home, storm or no storm. But Rossiter provided no excuse; he was all gratitude and easy politeness, more pleasant and friendly to Jim even than to his brother. Tom set out the whisky and sugar, sliced the lemon, put the kettle on, and furnished dry coats while the soaked garments hung up before the roaring fire that Orkney makes customary even when days are warm.

"It might be the equinoctials," observed Sandy, "if it wasn't late October." He shivered, for the tropics had thinned his blood.

"This ain't no ordinary storm," put in Rossiter, drying his drenched boots. "It reminds me a bit"—he jerked his head to the window that gave seawards, the rush of rain against the panes half drowning his voice—"reminds me a bit of yonder." He looked up, as though to find someone to agree with him, only one such person being in the room.

"Sure, it ain't," agreed Jim at once, but speaking slowly, "no ordinary storm." His voice was quiet as a child's. Tom, stooping over the kettle, felt something cold go trickling down his back. "It's from across the Atlantic too."

"All our big storms come from the sea," offered Sandy, saying just what Sandy was expected to say. His lank red hair lay matted on his forehead, making him look like an unhappy collie dog.

"There's no hospitality," Rossiter changed the talk, "like an islander's," as Tom mixed and filled the glasses. "He don't even ask 'Say when?'" He chuckled in his beard and turned to Sandy, well pleased with the compliment to his host. "Now, in Malay," he added dryly, "it's probably different, I guess." And the two men, one from Labrador, the other from the tropics, fell to bantering one another with heavy humour, while Tom made things comfortable and Jim stood silent with his back to the fire. At each blow of the wind that shook the building, a suitable remark was made, generally by Sandy: "Did you hear that now?" "Ninety miles an hour at least." "Good thing you build solid in this country!" while Rossiter occasionally repeated that it was an "uncommon storm" and that "it reminded" him of the northern tempests he had known "out yonder."

Tom said little, one thought and one thought only in his heart—the wish that the storm would abate and his guests depart. He felt uneasy about Jim. He hated Rossiter. In the kitchen he had steadied himself already with a good stiff drink, and was now half-way through a

second; the feeling was in him that he would need their help before the evening was out. Jim, he noticed, had left his glass untouched. His attention, clearly, went to the wind and the outer night; he added little to the conversation.

"Hark!" cried Sandy's shrill voice. "Did you hear that? That wasn't wind, I'll swear." He sat up, looking for all the world like a dog pricking its ears to something no one else could hear.

"The sea coming over the dunes," said Rossiter. "There'll be an awful tide to-night and a terrible sea off the Swarf. Moon at the full, too." He cocked his head sideways to listen. The roaring was tremendous, waves and wind combining with a result that almost shook the ground. Rain hit the glass with incessant volleys like duck shot.

It was then that Jim spoke, having said no word for a long time.

"It's good there's no trees," he mentioned quietly. "I'm glad of that."

"There'd be fearful damage, wouldn't there?" remarked Sandy. "They might fall on the house too."

But it was the tone Jim used that made Rossiter turn stiffly in his chair, looking first at the speaker, then at his brother. Tom caught both glances and saw the hard keen glitter in the eyes. This kind of talk, he decided, had got to stop, yet how to stop it he hardly knew, for his were not subtle methods, and rudeness to his guests ran too strong against the island customs. He refilled the glasses, thinking in his blunt fashion how best to achieve his object, when Sandy helped the situation without knowing it.

"That's my first," he observed, and all burst out laughing. For Sandy's tenth glass was equally his "first," and he absorbed his liquor like a sponge, yet showed no effects of it until the moment when he would suddenly collapse and sink helpless to the ground. The glass in question, however, was only his third, the final moment still far away.

"Three in one and one in three," said Rossiter, amid the general laughter, while Sandy, grave as a judge, half emptied it at a single gulp. Good-natured, obtuse as a cart-horse, the tropics, it seemed, had first worn out his nerves, then removed them entirely from his body. "That's Malay theology, I guess," finished Rossiter. And the laugh broke out again. Whereupon, setting his glass down, Sandy offered his usual explanation that the hot lands had thinned his blood, that he felt the cold in these "arctic islands," and that alcohol was a necessity of life with him. Tom, grateful for the unexpected help, encouraged him to talk, and Sandy, accustomed to neglect as a rule, responded readily. Having saved the situation, however, he now unwittingly led it back into the danger zone.

"A night for tales, eh?" he remarked, as the wind came howling with a burst of strangest noises against the house. "Down there in the States," he went on, "they'd say the evil spirits were out. They're a superstitious crowd, the natives. I remember once—" And he told a tale, half foolish, half interesting, of a mysterious track he had seen when following buffalo in the jungle. It ran



close to the spoor of a wounded buffalo for miles, a track unlike that of any known animal, and the natives, though unable to name it, regarded it with awe. It was a good sign, a kill was certain. They said it was a spirit track.

"You got your buffalo?" asked Tom.

"Found him two miles away, lying dead. The mysterious spoor came to an end close beside the carcass. It didn't continue."

"And that reminds me——" began old Rossiter, ignoring Tom's attempt to introduce another subject. He told them of the haunted island at Eagle River, and a tale of the man who would not stay buried on another island off the coast. From that he went on to describe the strange man-beast that hides in the deep forests of Labrador, manifesting but rarely, and dangerous to men who stray too far from camp, men with a passion for wild life over-strong in their blood—the great mythical Wendigo. And while he talked, Tom noticed that Sandy used each pause as a good moment for a drink, but that Jim's glass still remained untouched.

The atmosphere of incredible things, thus, grew in the little room, much as it gathers among the shadows round a forest camp-fire when men who have seen strange places of the world give tongue about them, knowing they will not be laughed at—an atmosphere, once established, it is vain to fight against. The ingrained superstition that hides in every mother's son comes up at such times to breathe. It came up now. Sandy, closer by several glasses to the moment, Tom saw, when he would be suddenly drunk, gave birth again, a tale this time of a Scottish planter who had brutally dismissed a native servant for no other reason than that he disliked him. The man disappeared completely, but the villagers hinted that he would—soon indeed that he had—come back, though "not quite as he went." The planter armed, knowing that vengeance might be violent. A black panther, meanwhile, was seen prowling about the bungalow. One night a noise outside his door on the veranda roused him. Just in time to see the black brute leaping over the railings into the compound, he fired, and the beast fell with a savage growl of pain. Help arrived and more shots were fired into the animal, as it lay, mortally wounded already, lashing its tail upon the grass. The lanterns, however, showed that instead of a panther, it was the servant they had shot to shreds.

Sandy told the story well, a certain odd conviction in his tone and manner, neither of them at all to the liking of his host. Uneasiness and annoyance had been growing in Tom for some time already, his inability to control the situation adding to his anger. Emotion was accumulating in him dangerously; it was directed chiefly against Rossiter, who, though saying nothing definite, somehow deliberately encouraged both talk and atmosphere. Given the conditions, it was natural enough the talk should take the turn it did take, but what made Tom more and more angry was that, if Rossiter had not been present, he could have stopped it easily enough. It was the presence of the old Hudson Bay man that prevented his taking decided action. He was afraid of Rossiter, afraid of putting his back up. That was the truth. His recognition of it made him furious.

"Tell us another, Sandy McKay," said the veteran. "There's a lot in such tales. They're found the world over—men turning into animals and the like."

And Sandy, yet nearer to his moment of collapse, but still showing no effects, obeyed willingly. He noticed nothing; the whisky was good, his tales were appreciated, and that sufficed him. He thanked Tom, who just then refilled his glass, and went on with his tale. But Tom, hatred and fury in his heart, had reached the point where he could no longer contain himself, and Rossiter's last words inflamed him. He went over, under cover of a tremendous clap of wind, to fill the old man's glass. The latter refused, covering the tumbler with his big, lean hand. Tom stood over him a moment, lowering his face. "You keep still," he whispered ferociously, but so that no one else heard it. He glared into his eyes with an intensity that held danger, and Rossiter, without answering, flung back that glare with equal, but with a calmer, anger.

The wind, meanwhile, had a trick of veering, and each time it shifted, Jim shifted his seat too. Apparently, he preferred to face the sound, rather than have his back to it.

"Your turn now for a tale," said Rossiter with purpose, when Sandy finished. He looked across at him, just as Jim, hearing the burst of wind at the walls behind him, was in the act of moving his chair again. The same moment the attack rattled the door and windows facing him. Jim, without answering, stood for a moment still as death, not knowing which way to turn.

"It's beatin' up from all sides," remarked Rossiter, "like it was goin' round the building."

There was a moment's pause, the four men listening with awe to the roar and power of the terrific wind. Tom listened too, but at the same time watched, wondering vaguely why he didn't cross the room and crash his fist into the old man's chattering mouth. Jim put out his hand and took his glass, but did not raise it to his lips. And a lull came abruptly in the storm, the wind sinking into a moment's dreadful silence. Tom and Rossiter turned their heads in the same instant and stared into each other's eyes. For Tom the instant seemed enormously prolonged. He realized the challenge in the other and that his rudeness had roused it into action. It had become a contest of wills—Justice battling against Love.

Jim's glass had now reached his lips, and the chattering of his teeth against its rim was audible.

But the lull passed quickly and the wind began again, though so gently at first, it had the sound of innumerable swift footsteps treading lightly, of countless hands fingering the doors and windows, but then suddenly with a mighty shout as it swept against the walls, rushed across the roof and descended like a battering-ram against the farther side.

"God, did you hear that?" cried Sandy. "It's trying to get in!" and having said it, he sank in a heap beside his chair, all of a sudden completely drunk. "It's wolves or panthersh," he mumbled in his stupor on the floor, "but whatsh's happened to Malay?" It was the last thing he said before unconsciousness took him, and apparently he was insensible to the kick on the head from a heavy farmer's

boot. For Jim's glass had fallen with a crash and the second kick was stopped midway. Tom stood spell-bound, unable to move or speak, as he watched his brother suddenly cross the room and open a window into the very teeth of the gale.

"Let be! Let be!" came the voice of Rossiter, an authority in it, a curious gentleness too, both of them new. He had risen, his lips were still moving, but the words that issued from them were inaudible, as the wind and rain leaped with a galloping violence into the room, smashing the glass to atoms and dashing a dozen loose objects helter-skelter on to the floor.

"I saw it!" cried Jim, in a voice that rose above the din and clamour of the elements. He turned and faced the others, but it was at Rossiter he looked. "I saw the leader." He shouted to make himself heard, although the tone was quiet. "A splash of white on his great chest. I saw them all!"

At the words, and at the expression in Jim's eyes, old Rossiter, white to the lips, dropped back into his chair as if a blow had struck him. Tom, petrified, felt his own heart stop. For through the broken window, above yet within the wind, came the sound of a wolf-pack running, howling in deep, full-throated chorus, mad for blood. It passed like a whirlwind and was gone. And, of the three men so close together, one sitting and two standing, Jim alone was in that terrible moment wholly master of himself.

Before the others could move or speak, he turned and looked full into the eyes of each in succession. His speech went back to his wilderness days:

"I done it," he said calmly. "I killed him—and I got ter go."

With a look of mystical horror on his face, he took one stride, flung the door wide, and vanished into the darkness.

So quick were both words and action, that Tom's paralysis passed only as the draught from the broken window banged the door behind him. He seemed to leap across the room, old Rossiter, tears on his cheeks and his lips mumbling foolish words, so close upon his heels that the backward blow of fury Tom aimed at his face caught him only in the neck and sent him reeling sideways to the floor instead of flat upon his back.

"Murderer! My brother's death upon you!" he shouted as he tore the door open again and plunged out into the night.

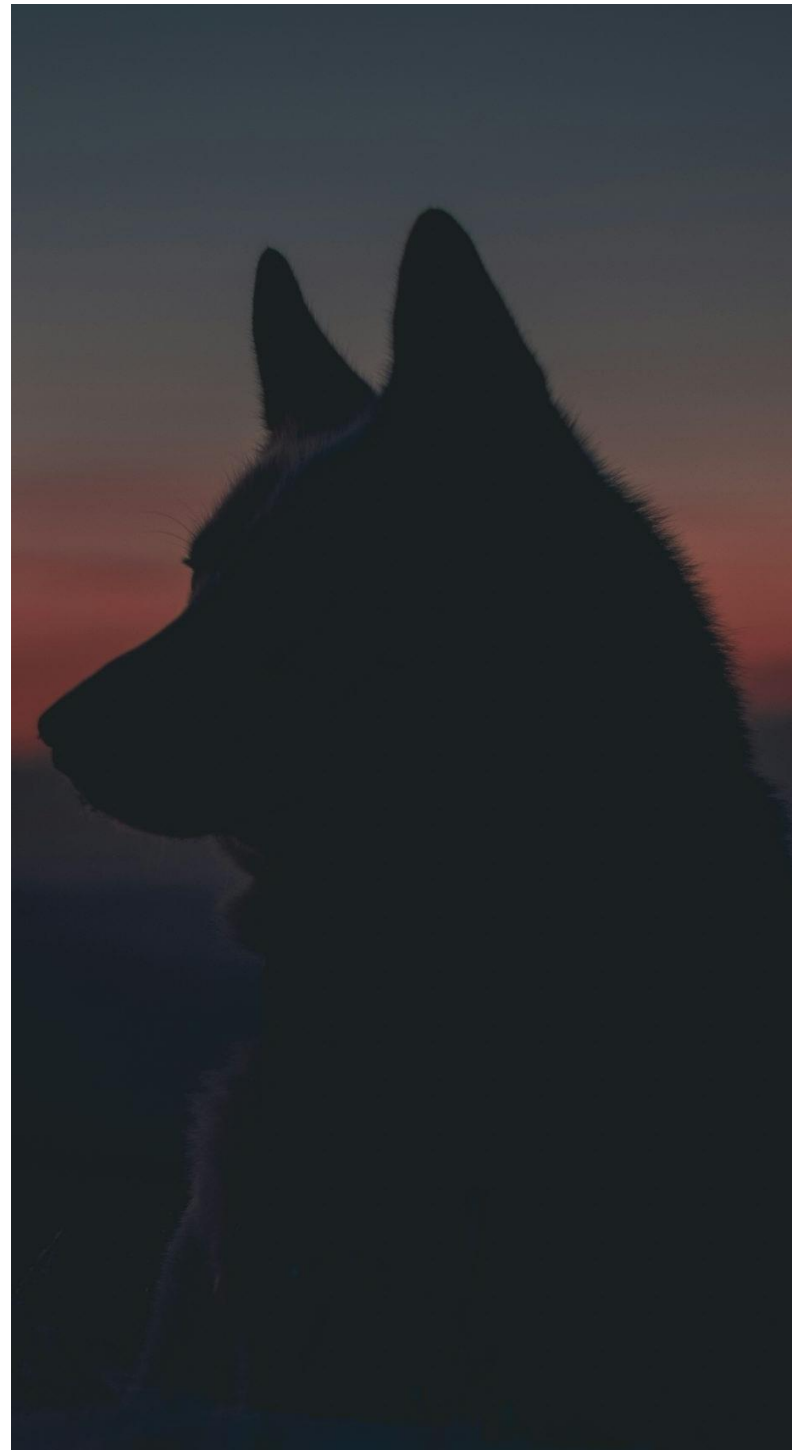
And the odd thing that happened then, the thing that touched old John Rossiter's reason, leaving him from that moment till his death a foolish man of uncertain mind and memory, happened when he and the unconscious, drink-sodden Sandy lay alone together on the stone floor of that farm-house room.

Rossiter, dazed by the blow and his fall, but in full possession of his senses, and the anger gone out of him owing to what he had brought about, this same John Rossiter sat up and saw Sandy also sitting up and staring at him hard. And Sandy was sober as a judge, his eyes and speech both clear, even his face unflushed.

"John Rossiter," he said, "it was not God who appointed you executioner. It was the devil." And his eyes, thought Rossiter, were like the eyes of an angel.

"Sandy McKay," he stammered, his teeth chattering and breath failing him. "Sandy McKay!" It was all the words that he could find. But Sandy, already sunk back into his stupor again, was stretched drunk and incapable upon the farm-house floor, and remained in that condition till the dawn.

Jim's body lay hidden among the dunes for many months and in spite of the most careful and prolonged searching. It was another storm that laid it bare. The sand had covered it. The clothes were gone, and the flesh, torn but not eaten, was naked to the December sun and wind.





# God of the Wild

Nick Winney



The Gray Tree  
Piet Mondrian

A.D. 75

Barates read the thin wooden tablet then surveyed the landscape before him, shaking his head.

*Fac murum circum arborem* the order read.

He slapped the dark-ridged bark of the ancient yew, laughing as he turned to the men of Legio XX. "Silvanus protects his own, men. Mark the line forty paces north. This tree is sacred to the Barbarians and Hadrian himself commands us take it, as tribute."

There were groans amongst the Legion. *This meant at least another week at the frontier and twice the work; twice the stone or more. And if the tree was sacred, wasn't this sure to incite them? The Brigantes were subdued but not defeated.* Nobody moved.

"Which of you would cut it down, and brave the wrath of the Dryad?" Barates received no answer. "Well then, to work! And know this, should any man fall within a league, his blood shall pour as tribute on the feet of the tree. It is the pagans' way, and we should not anger their Gods, so far from our home."

*Silvanus? Hamadryad? Brogha? Who is to know the name Cernunnos? Man? I watch the passing and the workings of all such - these metal clad ones, the stonecutters, and for centuries past, the blue faces, those that live and die and worship from the North. Their blood offerings tied to the boughs and anointing the roots, the blessings taken from our body. We passed timeless seasons thus, growing, changing, giving life to all, beneath and above, but all things must pass.*

AD 400

*"a' chraobh iubhair naomh air taobh thall a' bhalla"*

"Our most sacred Yew is dying," Ban Draoi, wails. She circles the cracked trunk, touching ash-soft bark which crumbles as to air. "Just as our people die, so it is with the spirit of our tree. We must grow another for Cernunnos, horned one, God of all that lives and is wild. Fetch me Oak, fetch me Yew and let us see which Cernunnos shall choose, and perhaps our tribe shall once more flourish in these hills."

*In our shadow, a dying shadow, two seeds are planted and blood offerings made, but only one grows stronger, taller. The roots take hold and spread deep into the earth, greeting the old ones, talking with the silent wordless tongue of the soul of the earth. This young Oak shall be my dwelling. And so it is for a*

*thousand summers, but even though an Oak takes three hundred winters to die, all things must pass.*

AD 1806

Wind makes flapping wings of their robes as they climb. A harsh wind, but with spring not far behind it, not a bone-deep cold one. The sun augurs well but warms nought. Sheep scatter before them; mud sucks at the boots until they come to more solid ground between the base of two hills. The teeth of the old wall are a backdrop.

"There he is: Father Oak," says one "He's done well to stand this winter past, but he'll not stand many more."

"What a place to have lived! And for so long, between these fine breasts!" The small group smile as they regard the curvaceous landscape, but soon the mood becomes sombre, befitting the purpose of the Most Ancient Order of the Druids of the Pantheon. The vinegar-aged "*Tome of the Ages*" is brought out, a sapling and a goat brought forward. They raise their cowls and chant old words they do not comprehend. The self-styled Archdruid smiles inwardly, while his followers lap up his mystic ritual. His mind strays to the gold sovereigns they paid as tithe and the buyer he has for the timber.

*Old oak groans and roots wither, barely the strength to draw life from the earth. I slumber whilst strange men come, mouthing sounds, meaningless man-sounds. It is the shrill scream of the horned goat whose life is taken, whose blood offering is made, that wakes me. And then singing! The singing of a young tree, vivid with green life. A child, and a strange one at that, not one that these soils have known before, but all trees speak the same wordless language to me; everything that lives. Everything but Man.*

27 SEPTEMBER 2023

Jumping from their quad bikes, they come at it from the far side of the wall. They know the land well, so the dark is no obstacle. In the pub, earlier, all the "what ifs" were washed away with a few pints. They're going to do it.

"Two minutes with the STIHL, and she'll be down," says Carl "We'll be hyem before eleven. It'll be a reet laugh. Be legendary, marra!"

Now they wait, leaning on the wall, smoking while the lights of a single car dwindle up the Military Road, westward.

"Do yee want to dee it?"

"Nah, yee dee it, Carl man. Was your idea."

With a cough, the chainsaw starts. Two deep, effortless cuts and, with a gun-shot crack to the heartwood, the murder is done. The tree stands for a few seconds, then groaning in agony, it tips and falls, the smaller branches



crushed and snapping splinter shrapnel into the air as the majestic tree hits the ground. The men stand in awe at what they have done, then, laughing, slap the bleeding stump a farewell and run into the night.

*I am awakened! My tree dies! Roots cry out! Our spirit screams at this severing and a million leaves whisper sorrow to the wind. But I am Cernunnos, God of all wild things, keeper of the trees. I will never die. The murderers flee but the grass will tell me where. On the tree base, throbbing with the pulse of the heart of the earth, a streak of Man blood soaks into our fresh wound. A blood offering.*

The next day, they go to work, trying hard to act as if nothing has happened, but messages fly back and forth between the two all day and they realise the wave of rage they have unleashed is travelling around the world.

“They’ll never prove it was us, marra,” says Carl, rubbing absently at the spelk in his hand. “And it’s just a fuck’n tree, after all. We’ll just keep wor heeds down, aye?”

In the days that follow, Carl grows uneasy. The wind makes half sounds, like words he cannot catch. His footprints stay in the wet grass, like a ghost has followed him. Shadows move in the corners of his eyes; figures appear and disappear in the treeline at dusk as he returns from work in the fields. At night, strange dreams startle him awake, and twigs rake at his window like patient fingers. He cuts them back. His hand throbs and reddens, but even with a red-hot pin, he cannot dig out the spelk. *I must get to the doctors.*

Two weeks pass, and the guilty pair dare to meet for a quiet pint. Muttering behind furtive glances, they can’t believe their notoriety, their small minds incapable of understanding the depth of their damage.

“I wish we’d never done it,” says Carl “Everything’s gone weird, I’m seeing stuff that’s not there. I cannot sleep, man! I feel panicked all the time.”

“It’s just nerves, divn’t fret man. You’d think we’d shot someone, they way they’re gannin’ on.”

“It’s not nerves, marra. It’s like I’m being followed. In the woods, the trees are moving, I keep hearing voices.” He slams his fist on the bar table, and winces sharply. His hand is livid red and swollen.

“You want to get that seen to mate. It’s proper infected. That’s what’s making you feel weird.”

*Such a creature of habit and ritual. Forward and back, forward and back he goes by day, through hedge and by tree and over grass and root. All know him now; all whisper to me and I to them. We know him, and his blood offering did not suffice.*

He’s standing by the stump of the tree. It’s blacker than night but everything has an aura. The silhouette of a horned creature towers before him, he wants to move but he can’t; plants writhe hypnotically over his feet. Whispers, layer on layer hum and rise to sing in his ears and the voice of the creature ululates above it all, first keening in sorrow then a blaring horn-deep bark. The words are unrecognisable but the meaning clear. Everything begins to move towards him at once, green and black and dark but shining, enveloping. He raises his hands in supplication, in defence, in fear but his fingers turn to branches, twigs and leaves sprouting from them. He screams himself awake. Fumbling for the bedside lamp, he yells with pain as he knocks his swollen hand and feels something spurting hot and stinking. Purple spots fizz in his eyes, and he hovers above unconsciousness, but the urgent horror of what he sees growing from his hand brings him back from the dark.

“I’m sorry,” he chokes out the words. New-grown twigs scrape his window, casting a shadow like a beckoning hand on his wall. He rises, dresses, crying with the pain in his hand, and goes to the barn to fetch his chainsaw. Dawn is an hour away as he sets off on his quad bike.

Hikers find him first, or part of him at least. The rest takes longer. Police arrive at the scene and rapidly tape off the area, but it’s too late to stop the social media storm. A photograph of the blood-soaked tree stump, the severed hand and a chainsaw is news around the world in hours. Carl’s accomplice sees it on his phone, but his frantic calls to Carl go unanswered. He sees he has a voicemail but cannot make out the garbled sobbing. In a panic, he deletes his messages, packs a bag, paces with indecision but the police come for him before he can make up his mind. They ask about Carl. He tells them he doesn’t know anything, but his eyes betray a different truth and they take him in.

The police feel sure they will find Carl soon. “He can’t have got far, not with the volume of blood he’s lost,” they say. Some traces lead away, north, but vanish. It’s as if the wild has swallowed him up. Divers search Crag Lough, without success.

As with so many of the missing dead, it’s a dog walker that finds him first, kneeling prostrated as if in worship before a yew tree. His body is half hidden by a lichened boulder and moss and fungi invade his head where it touches the ground. Ivy traces the outline of his corpse, and a sycamore sapling grows, rooted and intertwined with the bones of his arm.



# Plantiflora the Saltie

Shieldmaiden





**With an almighty shove**, Plantiflora pushed herself up off the seabed and shot out of the water at an almost vertical angle. Roars of delight rushed from the watching tourists as she closed her mighty jaws around a chunk of beef suspended from a pole.

With a massive splash that washed over the tourists, she plunged back into the depths.

"I'll get you back, buddy!" Otto leaned over the boat and shook his fist, water dripping from his forehead, ruining his posh European cut suit.

He turned and made his way over to the tour guide. "Do you recognise that crocodile?" He stood drenched and red faced before the young man.

"Yes" he responded warily "we call her Plantiflora, she comes by regularly to impress the tourists." he surveyed the short waterlogged man "she gave you a good splashing didn't she?"

"That was not funny!" Otto's face went a deeper red "this suit is worth a year of your wage young man!" he turned and stormed off.

"Who wears a suit on a tour in the Kimberly?" the tour guide muttered to a friend.

Plantiflora turned her tail and swung round into the mouth of the river. Her tummy full and nice day out she was feeling fine and dandy. The sun was setting and she raised her nose to the surface, and walked along the riverbed on her back legs, scanning the banks for signs of life.

A medium sized roo stood beside the river, Plantiflora slowly sunk down beneath the water and turned her feet towards the bank. Slowly she crawled closer and closer, her eyes peering up through the water to guide her. Soon she was beneath the shadow the roo had cast across the river. She paused, in preparation. With a lunge, she burst up, jaws spread wide towards the roo. "Rawr!" she cried.

The roo startled in terror and tried to leap back, but alas it was a monotreme and could not.

Plantiflora could almost taste the fur before the roo fell, scrabbling around, throwing dust into the air. The roo leapt up and shot away.

Plantiflora reached the peak of her lunge and dug her paws into the ground to stop her falling backwards. The dust swirled around her and got in her eyes and mouth. She sneezed and wheezed. She shook the dust from her eyes and then chuckled and slowly fell back into the river.

She continued upstream at a pleasant pace till she was safe in the mangroves. The darkness fell and she napped under her favourite tree.

A roar of a 100 horsepower engine startled her awake, and a bright light scanned the water around her. "Get me that wretched crocodile" Otto bellowed as the boat came to a stop.

"Alightty, we will. Take it easy mate." the crocodile hunters said as they peered in the beam of the torch.

"Calm down?! This crocodile cost me my new suit! It's worth more than you make in a year." Otto brushed

imaginary specs of dust off his suit. "Good thing I travel with a spare."

"There she is," one hunter pointed out as Plantiflora tried to slip silently into the water. A rope was thrown and caught around her mouth.

The struggle began. Plantiflora pulled back and tried to go under the water. The boat came closer as the men pulled on the rope. At last she managed to get into the water and began to splash around. A great wave washed over the boat, and Otto lost his balance and went in.

He yelled as he bobbed up and down in the water. The hunters focussed on bringing Plantiflora under control. At last she was hauled over the side and tied up on the bottom.

Otto was pulled in too. His red face glowed in the torchlight, as he stared down at Plantiflora struggling against the ropes. "That's two good suits you have cost me". He pulled a receipt from his pocket and held the sodding paper out in front of her face. "You had better work off this debt to me, or I will sell your hide."

The hunters turned the boat towards home and off they sped.

As the sun rose the following day, Plantiflora awoke to find herself in an unfamiliar environment. She was at the bottom of a small pond. As she swam upwards to the surface and looked around, things were still unclear. Around the pond was an area of grass but beyond that, she was surrounded by four large stone walls.

As the day wore on, people began to appear above the walls and gaped down at her. There was little for her to do except sit there and watch them. One of the people, a young boy, threw a peanut down which hit her face. After that, she angrily splashed back down into the water and stayed there.

This continued for a few days, every now and then someone would come and throw a dead fish at her for food.

She felt herself becoming more and more irritated. Here she was sitting around and getting peanuts thrown at her. This wasn't how things were meant to be. She was supposed to be eating the beef from tourists and then going up river to scare drinking animals.

On one of the days, a large crowd seemed to gather around her enclosure. She rose to the surface to have a look at what was going on. Then a man holding a chicken carcass in his hand stepped up in front of the crowd and spoke to them loudly. When he had finished speaking, he stepped down into her enclosure and started waving the chicken meat at her.

Plantiflora's spirits rose, after days of fish, some chicken would be a good change of pace for her diet. She swam to the edge of the pond and crawled out towards the man and the chicken.

Making a quick dash forwards, she launched towards the chicken. But her jaws closed around empty air. This was followed by the sound of laughter from the crowd. She looked around confused and then saw the man and the chicken a couple of metres away. Once again, he was waving the chicken at her.

She launched forwards again but the man and chicken dashed away at the last moment. More laughter from the crowd. She did it a third time and the same result. This process repeated several more times until the man eventually gave up the chicken to her.

Plantiflora took it in her jaws but now her spirit was deflated and she returned to the lake and ate it whilst sulking.

The following day was a sunny one. Plantiflora was awoken by a low rumbling sound coming from somewhere in her enclosure. She looked around to see a bald man who was pushing a lawn mower just a few metres from her. She had seen only a few lawn mowers in her lifetime before but this must have been amongst the finest.

Painted a bright green with red spinning blades, it was the most exciting thing to enter her enclosure since she got here. For a few moments she simply watched and admired the device. But then, fear stirred within her. When the man finished cutting the grass here, he would take the lawn mower away to somewhere else and deprive her of it.

No! She would not let that happen. That mower would stay here forever. Plantiflora leapt forwards. The man gave a short yelp as he saw the crocodile suddenly move towards him. Plantiflora's jaws closed around the front of the mower and she gave a mighty tug. The man pulled back, not willing to give up the mower so easily.

She pulled back once more and the man felt his feet beginning to slide. He yanked again on the handle of the mower but to no avail. Plantiflora was very determined. After one more mighty tug from her, the mower was pulled free of the man. Delighted, she slipped backwards into the water, bringing the mower with her.

For the rest of that day, the mower sat with a very happy crocodile at the bottom of the pond.

The lawn mower stayed with her for the next three days. Each day she would look at it lovingly. It brought joy to this otherwise dull enclosure. On the third day however, whilst she was napping on the bank of the pond, some humans crept into the enclosure. When she awoke, she found to her horror that the mower was gone.

There was nothing for it. Plantiflora was leaving this place. Later that day, the tour guide came by for a gander, and saw the sad saltie at the bottom of her pond.

"This just isn't right!" he thought to himself. "She deserves to be out in the sea entertaining my tourists, not be in here having peanuts thrown at her." He watched as a child threw a handful into the enclosure.

As the last zoo goer departed, the tour guide pulled out his bolt cutters and meddled with the gate. He was determined to be back later with friends to move her. But it was not to be, on the way home he was picked up by the cops for blowing over the limit.

Plantiflora emerged from her pond in the moon bathed enclosure. She moved around the walls, looking for an

escape. Coming upon the gate, she pushed and found that it gave way. Out she rushed onto the path and began to wander around the zoo. She passed a squawking bird that shut up when it saw her, and on past other ponds of crocodiles. The dingos barked and growled at her, and the kangaroos that wandered about the place rushed away in fright and then stood at a distance and watched her.

She made her way through the tourist shop and into the carpark. Underneath the boom gates she walked, and was soon on the edge of the highway. A truck zoomed by at breakneck speed and plantiflora coughed in the cloud of diesel left in its wake. This was no place for a civilised saltie like her. Gingerly she crossed the road and made her way through the sleepy town, past 10 pubs and on towards a river. The salt breeze beckoned to her every step.

Her paws beginning to bleed from the travelling, she sank gratefully into the river, and quietly began to make her way out to sea. This was not her river and she did not want to run into a bigger local croc.

A week later, the tour guide was scanning the sea, looking for a crocodile when he saw the familiar face of Plantiflora, he held out the beef and up she jumped, glowing and majestic, in her native habitat.

Otto leapt up from his seat, once again in his magnificent suit. He had missed the email from the zoo detailing her escape, as he received too many emails and wanted to ignore them to focus on touring. But he recognised Plantiflora. "What? How?" he gaped over the boat at her, as she swam in circles waiting for the tour guide to prepare more meat. "Damn you crocodile, I will get you this time!" he plunged over the side of the boat, to the screams of the tourists, to deal with Plantiflora once and for all.

Neither were ever seen again.





# Featured Artist

# Theodore

# Shaw-Taylor

Twitter/X @tstartworks

Telegram @tstartworks

**Tell us a bit about yourself.**

I'm an artist from England, mostly concerning myself with illustration and design. I have a burgeoning supply of art materials and a trusty wooden drawing board. I've developed a real love for my own artistic cultural inheritance and a desire to interact with and preserve it in a generative way. Since I think that my artistic abilities are my strongest merit, I believe that this indicates my true calling in life, so I am treading this path forwards come what may.

**You express yourself with great variation but do you have a soft spot for a particular technique?**

I'm glad the variation in my work comes through. I think this variation is partly owing to the fact that I haven't yet specialised into a particular style, medium or subject matter. Doing so is a safe bet for accruing a large audience, as I think people generally like consistency, and have specific aesthetic tastes which they enjoy being satiated by a reliable source. However, I am still finding myself in awe and reverence of so many different types of artwork and visual creations that I have found it hard to settle and fixate fully on one thing. It's been said that artists must first inhale the world to then exhale it in their own vision. It's still early days for me and I believe I am in this first period of inhalation, of reaching out, studying and beholding many different forms and ideas which



Study after Ferdinand Leeke's (1859-1937) oil painting Wotan's farewell to Brunhilde  
Graphite, gouache and ink on cold press watercolour paper.



I have to fully amalgamate. It may be a case of slowly settling and refining my own style or perhaps this indicates an unstable and eclectic part of my personality which should be reigned in. I am okay with being a bit of a jack or all trades for now, and I think there is little growth to be had in staying within the familiar confines of a comfort zone. As regards to a particular technique, I think I am better suited to a more refined and detailed approach. I enjoy delicate line work with ink and also watercolour. In terms of proper oil painting, in considering the surface and texture of the piece and every brush stroke and colour to be a form of visual poetry, that is a realm I have little to no experience in but do wish to approach in good time.







### What draws you to Medieval and Renaissance techniques?

What draws me to Medieval art is its transcendence. Medieval paintings had no intention of exactly recreating the natural appearances of the material world as it is seen directly by us through our eyes. It was instead intended as a form of visual theology - a way of telling stories through purely mental and visual forms and symbols. It attempted to peer through the veil so to speak; to penetrate to the essence of things - not to show the outward aspect of things but their inner reality. It is this that lends it the great imaginative and whimsical character that it possesses, as it transcends the realm of visible reality and breaks free from the laws of optics to instead illuminate the forms that the mind has perceived in its imaginings. Did Perseus really, historically and physically fly on the back of a winged horse, and slay the Kraken to save his maiden Andromeda? If myth is really a magical mode of dreaming, divorced from the immediate constraints of a purely physical existence, then why depict myth in a realistic way as if it really had happened in time and space? That's not to say that myth is not real, I believe myth to more than real - to reveal higher truths about human existence itself. You

can see the medieval manuscript that I copied of the subject is not a 'realistic' painting. It is a kind of poetic imagining. There are no shadows or light source as we know of them, but all things shine and radiate with their own inner light. That's not to say that it is not a skilled piece, and I think things should be judged by how well they live up to their makers intentions. It's also not a purely utilitarian form of art either; within this imaginative abstraction and symbolism there is a great amount of room for aesthetic and decorative qualities but those are things that are laid on top of a concrete and intelligible subject matter and are not the justification for the work itself - it's not just there to look nice, it always goes beyond that initial surface impression and can act as in aid to contemplation.

I was introduced to Renaissance art when I had just left art collage - there was a flyer posted through my letter box advertising a weekly life drawing classes held by The Renaissance Workshop in London. Being introduced to Renaissance draughtsmanship - to a tactile and practical yet deeply personal approach to drawing helped me grow immensely as an artist. Whilst I don't concern myself with a realistic or photorealistic method of drawing and painting (I think it's boring and materialistic). I do think that being able to accurately take stock of and record forms and shapes via an earnest investigative approach is a very useful skill. Speaking generally there is a large observational approach to Renaissance art, but the artist is never chained and held back by a passive and slavish mere copying of nature. He looks to nature for inspiration, but his own imagination and poetic sense of design always comes first. I believe this is called naturalism. Whilst there may be dubious historical elements to the Renaissance, there's no denying that it was a period of astounding human greatness and creativity. I still copy drawings from Renaissance masters to this day.



**As this is a literature magazine, can you tell us what kind of things you have been reading recently?**

I have been enjoying literature greatly recently. I am currently reading Mervyn Peake's enormous Gormanghast trilogy. Gormanghast is large and extensive castle which is the inheritance of the Groan family. The book begins with the birth of the new heir Titus. It is heavily character driven but I can start to see a plot emerging, with themes being woven around the idea of adherence to tradition and the antagonism of change. Peak was an illustrator himself and it shows in his writing, which is intensely visual and descriptive, for example taking whole pages to describe the effect of a beam of light coming through the window to illuminate a stain of wine on a huge rotund chefs apron, as he dances a jig atop a mound of barrels.

I have also been reading the short stories of Clarke Ashton Smith. An American pulp writer from the 1920's who gained renown for his poetry and also for writing for Weird Tales Magazine back in the day along side H.P Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. Smith spent one day at school, before coming home and explaining to this parents that he wasn't going back. They instead sent him to the local library, where he proceed to read every single book, cover to cover, including the dictionary. His writing is beautiful and poetic yet remote and distant, focusing on the macabre. With his writings mostly being of a narrative nature, he spins tales of incredibly imaginative and emotive weirdness, sometimes with a tinges of irony. He makes you believe his dark and mysterious worlds and their terrifying happenings and entities are as real as your own life. I luckily managed to come by his whole collection on ebay and have been working my way through now, enjoying every page.

I also enjoy reading books about artists from various periods which discuss their work and life, which are often precariously piled up on my desk.

**Aside from painting, do you have any other passions?** When I'm not drawing, I enjoy physical training, practising bush craft in the woods alone or with friends. I like woodwork but my carpentry is very crude and basic at this point in time. Hiking is invigorating too, especially across the beautiful English landscape. I like visiting great places like cathedrals and castles, something with a bit of history. I love heavy metal, black metal, stoner rock and dungeon synth. Sometimes I'll enjoy older video games or films. I've also been trying my hand at a bit of writing as well of late.

Interior book illustration for the Novella 'The Life Feast', by Jordan Allen





# DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT

Nathaniel Hawthorne



**That very singular man**, old Doctor Heidegger, once invited four venerable friends to meet him in his study. There were three white-bearded gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, and a withered gentlewoman whose name was the Widow Wycherley. They were all melancholy old creatures, who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was that they were not long ago in their graves. Mr. Medbourne, in the vigor of his age, had been a prosperous merchant, but had lost his all by a frantic speculation, and was no little better than a mendicant. Colonel Killigrew had wasted his best years, and his health and substance, in the pursuit of sinful pleasures, which had given birth to a brood of pains, such as the gout and divers other torments of soul and body. Mr. Gascoigne was a ruined politician, a man of evil fame, or at least had been so, till time had buried him from the knowledge of the present generation, and made him obscure instead of infamous. As for the Widow Wycherley, tradition tells us that she was a great beauty in her day; but, for a long while past, she had lived in deep seclusion, on account of certain scandalous stories which had prejudiced the gentry of the town against her. It is a circumstance worth mentioning that each of these three old gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, were early lovers of the Widow Wycherley, and had once been on the point of cutting each other's throats for her sake. And, before proceeding further, I will merely hint that Doctor Heidegger and all his four guests were sometimes thought to be a little beside themselves; as is not unfrequently the case with old people, when worried either by present troubles or woful recollections.

"My dear friends," said Doctor Heidegger, motioning them to be seated, "I am desirous of your assistance in one of those little experiments with which I amuse myself here in my study."

If all stories were true, Doctor Heidegger's study must have been a very curious place. It was a dim, old-fashioned chamber, festooned with cobwebs and besprinkled with antique dust. Around the walls stood several oaken bookcases, the lower shelves of which were filled with rows of gigantic folios and black-letter quartos, and the upper with little parchment-covered duodecimos. Over the central bookcase was a bronze bust of Hippocrates, with which, according to some authorities, Doctor Heidegger was accustomed to hold consultations in all difficult cases of his practice. In the obscurest corner of the room stood a tall and narrow oaken closet, with its door ajar, within which doubtfully appeared a skeleton. Between two of the bookcases hung a looking-glass, presenting its high and dusty plate within a tarnished gilt frame. Among many wonderful stories related of this mirror, it was fabled that the spirits of all the doctor's deceased patients dwelt within its verge, and would stare him in the face whenever he looked thitherward. The opposite side of the chamber was ornamented with the full-length portrait of a young lady, arrayed in the faded magnificence of silk, satin, and brocade, and with a visage as faded as her dress. Above half a century ago Doctor Heidegger had been on the

point of marriage with this young lady; but, being affected with some slight disorder, she had swallowed one of her lover's prescriptions, and died on the bridal evening. The greatest curiosity of the study remains to be mentioned; it was a ponderous folio volume, bound in black leather, with massive silver clasps. There were no letters on the back, and nobody could tell the title of the book. But it was well known to be a book of magic; and once, when a chambermaid had lifted it, merely to brush away the dust, the skeleton had rattled in its closet, the picture of the young lady had stepped one foot upon the floor, and several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror; while the brazen head of Hippocrates frowned, and said: "Forbear!"

Such was Doctor Heidegger's study. On the summer afternoon of our tale a small round table, as black as ebony, stood in the centre of the room, sustaining a cut-glass vase of beautiful form and workmanship. The sunshine came through the window, between the heavy festoons of two faded damask curtains, and fell directly across this vase; so that a mild splendor was reflected from it on the ashen visages of the five old people who sat around. Four champagne glasses were also on the table.

"My dear old friends," repeated Doctor Heidegger, "may I reckon on your aid in performing an exceedingly curious experiment?"

Now Doctor Heidegger was a very strange old gentleman, whose eccentricity had become the nucleus for a thousand fantastic stories. Some of these fables, to my shame be it spoken, might possibly be traced back to mine own veracious self; and if any passages of the present tale should startle the reader's faith, I must be content to bear the stigma of a fiction-monger.

When the doctor's four guests heard him talk of his proposed experiment, they anticipated nothing more wonderful than the murder of a mouse in an air-pump or the examination of a cobweb by the microscope, or some similiar nonsense, with which he was constantly in the habit of pestering his intimates. But without waiting for a reply, Doctor Heidegger hobbled across the chamber, and returned with the same ponderous folio, bound in black leather, which common report affirmed to be a book of magic. Undoing the silver clasps, he opened the volume, and took from among its black-letter pages a rose, or what was once a rose, though now the green leaves and crimson petals had assumed one brownish hue, and the ancient flower seemed ready to crumble to dust in the doctor's hands.

"This rose," said Doctor Heidegger, with a sigh, "this same withered and crumbling flower, blossomed five and fifty years ago. It was given me by Sylvia Ward, whose portrait hangs yonder, and I meant to wear it in my bosom at our wedding. Five and fifty years it has been treasured between the leaves of this old volume. Now, would you deem it possible that this rose of half a century could ever bloom again?"

"Nonsense!" said the Widow Wycherley, with a peevish toss of her head. "You might as well ask whether an old woman's wrinkled face could ever bloom again."

"See!" answered Doctor Heidegger.



He uncovered the vase, and threw the faded rose into the water which it contained. At first, it lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon, however, a singular change began to be visible. The crushed and dried petals stirred, and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a death-like slumber; the slender stalk and twigs of foliage became green; and there was the rose of half a century, looking as fresh as when Sylvia Ward had first given it to her lover. It was scarcely full blown; for some of its delicate red leaves curled modestly around its moist bosom, within which two or three dewdrops were sparkling.

"That is certainly a very pretty deception," said the doctor's friends; careless, however, for they had witnessed greater miracles at a conjurer's show; "pray how was it effected?"

"Did you ever hear of the 'Fountain of Youth,'" asked Doctor Heidegger, "which Ponce de Leon, the Spanish adventurer, went in search of, two or three centuries ago?"

"But did Ponce de Leon ever find it?" said the Widow Wycherley.

"No," answered Doctor Heidegger, "for he never sought it in the right place. The famous Fountain of Youth, if I am rightly informed, is situated in the southern part of the Floridian peninsula, not far from Lake Macaco. Its source is overshadowed by several magnolias, which, though numberless centuries old, have been kept as fresh as violets, by the virtues of this wonderful water. An acquaintance of mine, knowing my curiosity in such matters, has sent me what you see in the vase."

"Ahem!" said Colonel Killigrew, who believed not a word of the doctor's story; "and what may be the effect of this fluid on the human frame?"

"You shall judge for yourself, my dear Colonel," replied Doctor Heidegger; "and all of you, my respected friends, are welcome to so much of this admirable fluid as may restore to you the bloom of youth. For my own part, having had much trouble in growing old, I am in no hurry to grow young again. With your permission, therefore, I will merely watch the progress of the experiment."

While he spoke, Doctor Heidegger had been filling the four champagne glasses with the water of the Fountain of Youth. It was apparently impregnated with an effervescent gas; for little bubbles were continually ascending from the depths of the glasses, and bursting in silvery spray at the surface. As the liquor diffused a pleasant perfume, the old people doubted now that it possessed cordial and comfortable properties; and though utter sceptics as to its rejuvenescent power, they were inclined to swallow it at once. But Doctor Heidegger besought them to stay a moment.

"Before you drink, my respectable old friends," said he, "it would be well that, with the experience of a lifetime to direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for your guidance, in passing a second time through the perils of youth. Think what a sin and shame it would be if, with your peculiar advantages, you should not become

patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of the age!"

The doctor's four venerable friends made him no answer, except by a feeble and tremulous laugh; so very ridiculous was the idea that, knowing how closely repentance treads behind the steps of error, they should ever go astray again.

"Drink, then," said the doctor, bowing: "I rejoice that I have so well selected the subjects of my experiment."

With palsied hands they raised the glasses to their lips. The liquor, if it really possessed such virtues as Doctor Heidegger imputed to it, could not have been bestowed on four human beings who needed it more wofully. They looked as if they had never known what youth or pleasure was, but had been the offspring of nature's dotage, and always the gray, decrepit, sapless, miserable creatures, who now sat stooping round the doctor's table, without life enough in their souls or bodies to be animated even by the prospect of growing young again. They drank off the water, and replaced their glasses on the table.

Assuredly there was an almost immediate improvement in the aspect of the party, not unlike what might have been produced by a glass of generous wine, together with a sudden glow of cheerful sunshine, brightening over all their visages at once. There was a healthful suffusion on their cheeks, instead of the ashen hue that had made them look so corpse-like. They gazed at one another, and fancied that some magic power had really begun to smooth away the deep and sad inscriptions which Father Time had been so long engraving on their brows. The Widow Wycherley adjusted her cap, for she felt almost like a woman again.

"Give us more of this wondrous water!" cried they, eagerly. "We are younger—but we are still too old! Quick—give us more!"

"Patience! patience!" quoth Doctor Heidegger, who sat watching the experiment with philosophic coolness. "You have been a long time growing old. Surely you might be content to grow young in half an hour! But the water is at your service."

Again he filled their glasses with the liquor of youth, enough of which still remained in the vase to turn half the old people in the city to the age of their own grandchildren. While the bubbles were yet sparkling on the brim, the doctor's four guests snatched their glasses from the table, and swallowed the contents at a single gulp. Was it delusion? Even while the draught was passing down their throats it seemed to have wrought a change on their whole systems. Their eyes grew clear and bright; a dark shade deepened among their silvery locks; they sat round the table, three gentlemen of middle age, and a woman hardly beyond her buxom prime.

"My dear widow, you are charming!" cried Colonel Killigrew, whose eyes had been fixed upon her face, while the shadows of age were flitting from it like darkness from the crimson daybreak.

The fair widow knew of old that Colonel Killigrew's compliments were not always measured by sober truth; so she started up and ran to the mirror, still dreading that the ugly visage of an old woman would meet her gaze.

Meanwhile the three gentlemen behaved in such a manner as proved that the water of the Fountain of Youth possessed some intoxicating qualities, unless, indeed, their exhilaration of spirits were merely a lightsome dizziness, caused by the sudden removal of the weight of years. Mr. Gascoigne's mind seemed to run on political topics, but whether relating to the past, present, or future could not easily be determined, since the same ideas and phrases have been in vogue these fifty years. Now he rattled forth full-throated sentences about patriotism, national glory, and the people's rights; now he muttered some perilous stuff or other, in a sly and doubtful whisper, so cautiously that even his own conscience could scarcely catch the secret; and now, again, he spoke in measured accents and a deeply deferential tone, as if a royal ear were listening to his well-turned periods. Colonel Killigrew all this time had been trolling forth a jolly battle-song, and ringing his glass toward the buxom figure of the Widow Wycherley. On the other side of the table Mr. Medbourne was involved in a calculation of dollars and cents, with which was strangely intermingled a project for supplying the East Indies with ice, by harnessing a team of whales to the polar icebergs.

As for the Widow Wycherley, she stood before the mirror, courtesying and simpering to her own image, and greeting it as the friend whom she loved better than all the world beside. She thrust her face close to the glass to see whether some long-remembered wrinkle or crow's-foot had indeed vanished. She examined whether the snow had so entirely melted from her hair that the venerable cap could be safely thrown aside. At last, turning briskly away, she came with a sort of dancing step to the table.

"My dear old doctor," cried she, "pray favor me with another glass!"

"Certainly, my dear madam, certainly!" replied the complaisant doctor.

"See! I have already filled the glasses."

There, in fact, stood the four glasses, brimful of this wonderful water, the delicate spray of which, as it effervesced from the surface, resembled the tremulous glitter of diamonds. It was now so nearly sunset that the chamber had grown duskier than ever; but a mild and moon-like splendor gleamed from within the vase, and rested alike on the four guests, and on the doctor's venerable figure. He sat in a high-backed, elaborately carved oaken chair, with a gray dignity of aspect that might have well befitted that very Father Time, whose power had never been disputed, save by this fortunate company. Even while quaffing the third draught of the Fountain of Youth, they were almost awed by the expression of his mysterious visage.

But the next moment the exhilarating gush of young life shot through their veins. They were now in the happy prime of youth. Age, with its miserable train of cares, and sorrows, and diseases, was remembered only as the trouble of a dream, from which they had joyously awoke. The fresh gloss of the soul, so early lost, and without which the world's successive scenes had been but a gallery of faded pictures, again threw its enchantment

over all their prospects. They felt like new-created beings in a new-created universe.

"We are young! We are young!" they cried, exultingly.

Youth, like the extremity of age, had effaced the strongly marked characteristics of middle life, and mutually assimilated them all. They were a group of merry youngsters, almost maddened with the exuberant frolicsomeness of their years. The most singular effect of their gayety was an impulse to mock the infirmity and decrepitude of which they had so lately been the victims. They laughed loudly at their old-fashioned attire—the wide-skirted coats and flapped waistcoats of the young men, and the ancient cap and gown of the blooming girl. One limped across the floor like a gouty grandfather; one set a pair of spectacles astride of his nose, and pretended to pore over the black-letter pages of the book of magic; a third seated himself in an arm-chair, and strove to imitate the venerable dignity of Doctor Heidegger. Then all shouted mirthfully, and leaped about the room. The Widow Wycherley—if so fresh a damsel could be called a widow—tripped up to the doctor's chair with a mischievous merriment in her rosy face.

"Doctor, you dear old soul," cried she, "get up and dance with me!" And then the four young people laughed louder than ever, to think what a queer figure the poor old doctor would cut.

"Pray excuse me," answered the doctor, quietly. "I am old and rheumatic, and my dancing days were over long ago. But either of these gay young gentlemen will be glad of so pretty a partner."

"Dance with me, Clara!" cried Colonel Killigrew.

"She promised me her hand fifty years ago!" exclaimed Mr. Medbourne.

They all gathered round her. One caught both her hands in his passionate grasp—another threw his arm about her waist—the third buried his hand among the curls that clustered beneath the widow's cap. Blushing, panting, struggling, chiding, laughing, her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns, she strove to disengage herself, yet still remained in their triple embrace. Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalry, with bewitching beauty for the prize. Yet, by a strange deception, owing to the duskiness of the chamber and the antique dresses which they still wore, the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grand-sires, ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shrivelled grandam.

But they were young: their burning passions proved them so. Inflamed to madness by the coquetry of the girl-widow, who neither granted nor quite withheld her favors, the three rivals began to interchange threatening glances. Still keeping hold of the fair prize, they grappled fiercely at one another's throats. As they struggled to and fro, the table was overturned, and the vase dashed into a thousand fragments. The precious Water of Youth flowed in a bright stream across the floor, moistening the wings of a butterfly, which, grown old in the decline of summer, had alighted there to die. The insect fluttered lightly through the chamber, and settled on the snowy head of Doctor Heidegger.



"Come, come, gentlemen!—come, Madame Wycherley!" exclaimed the doctor, "I really must protest against this riot."

They stood still and shivered; for it seemed as if gray Time were calling them back from their sunny youth, far down into the chill and darksome vale of years. They looked at old Doctor Heidegger, who sat in his carved arm-chair, holding the rose of half a century which he had rescued from among the fragments of the shattered vase. At the motion of his hand the rioters resumed their seats, the more readily because their violent exertions had wearied them, youthful though they were.

"My poor Sylvia's rose!" ejaculated Doctor Heidegger, holding it in the light of the sunset clouds; "it appears to be fading again."

And so it was. Even while the party were looking at it the flower continued to shrivel up, till it became as dry and fragile as when the doctor had first thrown it into the vase. He shook off the few drops of moisture which clung to its petals.

"I love it as well thus as in its dewy freshness," observed he, pressing the withered rose to his withered lips. While he spoke, the butterfly fluttered down from the doctor's snowy head, and fell upon the floor.

His guests shivered again. A strange dullness, whether of the body or spirit they could not tell, was creeping gradually over them all. They gazed at one another, and fancied that each fleeting moment snatched away a charm, and left a deepening furrow where none had been before. Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a lifetime been crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four aged people, sitting with their old friend, Doctor Heidegger?

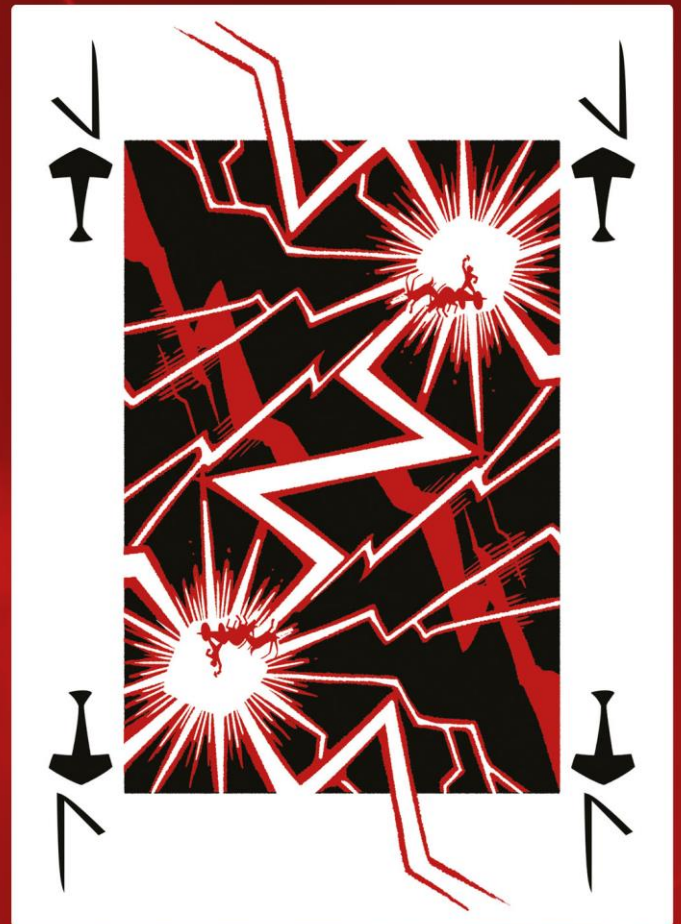
"Are we grown old again so soon?" cried they, dolefully.

In truth, they had. The Water of Youth possessed merely a virtue more transient than that of wine. The delirium which it created had effervesced away. Yes, they were old again! With a shuddering impulse, that showed her a woman still, the widow clasped her skinny hands over her face, and wished that the coffin lid were over it, since it could be no longer beautiful.

"Yes, friends, ye are old again," said Doctor Heidegger; "and lo! the Water of Youth is all lavished on the ground. Well, I bemoan it not; for if the fountain gushed at my doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it—no, though its delirium were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!"

But the doctor's four friends had taught no such lesson to themselves. They resolved forthwith to make a pilgrimage to Florida, and quaff at morning, noon, and night from the Fountain of Youth.

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# A Dog's Tale

Mark Twain



Dog from Ornans  
Gustave Courbet



## I

**My father was a St. Bernard**, my mother was a collie, but I am a Presbyterian. This is what my mother told me; I do not know these nice distinctions myself. To me they are only fine large words meaning nothing. My mother had a fondness for such; she liked to say them, and see other dogs look surprised and envious, as wondering how she got so much education. But, indeed, it was not real education; it was only show: she got the words by listening in the dining-room and drawing-room when there was company, and by going with the children to Sunday-school and listening there; and whenever she heard a large word she said it over to herself many times, and so was able to keep it until there was a dogmatic gathering in the neighborhood, then she would get it off, and surprise and distress them all, from pocket-pup to mastiff, which rewarded her for all her trouble. If there was a stranger he was nearly sure to be suspicious, and when he got his breath again he would ask her what it meant. And she always told him. He was never expecting this, but thought he would catch her; so when she told him, he was the one that looked ashamed, whereas he had thought it was going to be she. The others were always waiting for this, and glad of it and proud of her, for they knew what was going to happen, because they had had experience. When she told the meaning of a big word they were all so taken up with admiration that it never occurred to any dog to doubt if it was the right one; and that was natural, because, for one thing, she answered up so promptly that it seemed like a dictionary speaking, and for another thing, where could they find out whether it was right or not? for she was the only cultivated dog there was. By-and-by, when I was older, she brought home the word Unintellectual, one time, and worked it pretty hard all the week at different gatherings, making much unhappiness and despondency; and it was at this time that I noticed that during that week she was asked for the meaning at eight different assemblages, and flashed out a fresh definition every time, which showed me that she had more presence of mind than culture, though I said nothing, of course. She had one word which she always kept on hand, and ready, like a life-preserver, a kind of emergency word to strap on when she was likely to get washed overboard in a sudden way—that was the word Synonymous. When she happened to fetch out a long word which had had its day weeks before and its prepared meanings gone to her dump-pile, if there was a stranger there of course it knocked him groggy for a couple of minutes, then he would come to, and by that time she would be away down the wind on another tack, and not expecting anything; so when he'd hail and ask her to cash in, I (the only dog on the inside of her game) could see her canvas flicker a moment,—but only just a moment,—then it would belly out taut and full, and she would say, as calm as a summer's day, "It's synonymous with supererogation," or some godless long reptile of a word like that, and go placidly about and skim away on the next tack, perfectly comfortable, you know, and leave that stranger looking profane and embarrassed, and the

initiated slatting the floor with their tails in unison and their faces transfigured with a holy joy.

And it was the same with phrases. She would drag home a whole phrase, if it had a grand sound, and play it six nights and two matinees, and explain it a new way every time,—which she had to, for all she cared for was the phrase; she wasn't interested in what it meant, and knew those dogs hadn't wit enough to catch her, anyway. Yes, she was a daisy! She got so she wasn't afraid of anything, she had such confidence in the ignorance of those creatures. She even brought anecdotes that she had heard the family and the dinner guests laugh and shout over; and as a rule she got the nub of one chestnut hitched onto another chestnut, where, of course, it didn't fit and hadn't any point; and when she delivered the nub she fell over and rolled on the floor and laughed and barked in the most insane way, while I could see that she was wondering to herself why it didn't seem as funny as it did when she first heard it. But no harm was done; the others rolled and barked too, privately ashamed of themselves for not seeing the point, and never suspecting that the fault was not with them and there wasn't any to see.

You can see by these things that she was of a rather vain and frivolous character; still, she had virtues, and enough to make up, I think. She had a kind heart and gentle ways, and never harbored resentments for injuries done her, but put them easily out of her mind and forgot them; and she taught her children her kindly way, and from her we learned also to be brave and prompt in time of danger, and not to run away, but face the peril that threatened friend or stranger, and help him the best we could without stopping to think what the cost might be to us. And she taught us, not by words only, but by example, and that is the best way and the surest and the most lasting. Why, the brave things she did, the splendid things! she was just a soldier; and so modest about it—well, you couldn't help admiring her, and you couldn't help imitating her; not even a King Charles spaniel could remain entirely despicable in her society. So, as you see, there was more to her than her education.

## II

When I was well grown, at last, I was sold and taken away, and I never saw her again. She was broken-hearted, and so was I, and we cried; but she comforted me as well as she could, and said we were sent into this world for a wise and good purpose, and must do our duties without repining, take our life as we might find it, live it for the best good of others, and never mind about the results; they were not our affair. She said men who did like this would have a noble and beautiful reward by-and-by in another world, and although we animals would not go there, to do well and right without reward would give to our brief lives a worthiness and dignity which in itself would be a reward. She had gathered these things from time to time when she had gone to the Sunday-school with the children, and had laid them up in her memory more carefully than she had done with those other words and phrases; and she had studied them deeply, for her

good and ours. One may see by this that she had a wise and thoughtful head, for all there was so much lightness and vanity in it.

So we said our farewells, and looked our last upon each other through our tears; and the last thing she said—keeping it for the last to make me remember it the better, I think—was, "In memory of me, when there is a time of danger to another do not think of yourself, think of your mother, and do as she would do."

Do you think I could forget that? No.

### III

It was such a charming home!—my new one; a fine great house, with pictures, and delicate decorations, and rich furniture, and no gloom anywhere, but all the wilderness of dainty colors lit up with flooding sunshine; and the spacious grounds around it, and the great garden—oh, greensward, and noble trees, and flowers, no end! And I was the same as a member of the family; and they loved me, and petted me, and did not give me a new name, but called me by my old one that was dear to me because my mother had given it me—Aileen Mavourneen. She got it out of a song; and the Grays knew that song, and said it was a beautiful name.

Mrs. Gray was thirty, and so sweet and so lovely, you cannot imagine it; and Sadie was ten, and just like her mother, just a darling slender little copy of her, with auburn tails down her back, and short frocks; and the baby was a year old, and plump and dimpled, and fond of me, and never could get enough of hauling on my tail, and hugging me, and laughing out its innocent happiness; and Mr. Gray was thirty-eight, and tall and slender and handsome, a little bald in front, alert, quick in his movements, businesslike, prompt, decided, unsentimental, and with that kind of trim-chiselled face that just seems to glint and sparkle with frosty intellectuality! He was a renowned scientist. I do not know what the word means, but my mother would know how to use it and get effects. She would know how to depress a rat-terrier with it and make a lap-dog look sorry he came. But that is not the best one; the best one was Laboratory. My mother could organize a Trust on that one that would skin the tax-collars off the whole herd. The laboratory was not a book, or a picture, or a place to wash your hands in, as the college president's dog said—no, that is the lavatory; the laboratory is quite different, and is filled with jars, and bottles, and electrics, and wires, and strange machines; and every week other scientists came there and sat in the place, and used the machines, and discussed, and made what they called experiments and discoveries; and often I came, too, and stood around and listened, and tried to learn, for the sake of my mother, and in loving memory of her, although it was a pain to me, as realizing what she was losing out of her life and I gaining nothing at all; for try as I might, I was never able to make anything out of it at all.

Other times I lay on the floor in the mistress's workroom and slept, she gently using me for a footstool, knowing it pleased me, for it was a caress; other times I spent an hour in the nursery, and got well tousled and

made happy; other times I watched by the crib there, when the baby was asleep and the nurse out for a few minutes on the baby's affairs; other times I romped and raced through the grounds and the garden with Sadie till we were tired out, then slumbered on the grass in the shade of a tree while she read her book; other times I went visiting among the neighbor dogs,—for there were some most pleasant ones not far away, and one very handsome and courteous and graceful one, a curly haired Irish setter by the name of Robin Adair, who was a Presbyterian like me, and belonged to the Scotch minister.

The servants in our house were all kind to me and were fond of me, and so, as you see, mine was a pleasant life. There could not be a happier dog than I was, nor a gratefuller one. I will say this for myself, for it is only the truth: I tried in all ways to do well and right, and honor my mother's memory and her teachings, and earn the happiness that had come to me, as best I could.

By-and-by came my little puppy, and then my cup was full, my happiness was perfect. It was the dearest little waddling thing, and so smooth and soft and velvety, and had such cunning little awkward paws, and such affectionate eyes, and such a sweet and innocent face; and it made me so proud to see how the children and their mother adored it, and fondled it, and exclaimed over every little wonderful thing it did. It did seem to me that life was just too lovely to—

Then came the winter. One day I was standing a watch in the nursery. That is to say, I was asleep on the bed. The baby was asleep in the crib, which was alongside the bed, on the side next the fireplace. It was the kind of crib that has a lofty tent over it made of a gauzy stuff that you can see through. The nurse was out, and we two sleepers were alone. A spark from the wood-fire was shot out, and it lit on the slope of the tent. I suppose a quiet interval followed, then a scream from the baby woke me, and there was that tent flaming up toward the ceiling! Before I could think, I sprang to the floor in my fright, and in a second was half-way to the door; but in the next half-second my mother's farewell was sounding in my ears, and I was back on the bed again. I reached my head through the flames and dragged the baby out by the waistband, and tugged it along, and we fell to the floor together in a cloud of smoke; I snatched a new hold, and dragged the screaming little creature along and out at the door and around the bend of the hall, and was still tugging away, all excited and happy and proud, when the master's voice shouted:

"Begone, you cursed beast!" and I jumped to save myself; but he was wonderfully quick, and chased me up, striking furiously at me with his cane, I dodging this way and that, in terror, and at last a strong blow fell upon my left fore-leg, which made me shriek and fall, for the moment, helpless; the cane went up for another blow, but never descended, for the nurse's voice rang wildly out, "The nursery's on fire!" and the master rushed away in that direction, and my other bones were saved.

The pain was cruel, but, no matter, I must not lose any time; he might come back at any moment; so I limped on three legs to the other end of the hall, where there was



a dark little stairway leading up into a garret where old boxes and such things were kept, as I had heard say, and where people seldom went. I managed to climb up there, then I searched my way through the dark among the piles of things, and hid in the secretest place I could find. It was foolish to be afraid there, yet still I was; so afraid that I held in and hardly even whimpered, though it would have been such a comfort to whimper, because that eases the pain, you know. But I could lick my leg, and that did me some good.

For half an hour there was a commotion down-stairs, and shoutings, and rushing footsteps, and then there was quiet again. Quiet for some minutes, and that was grateful to my spirit, for then my fears began to go down; and fears are worse than pains,—oh, much worse. Then came a sound that froze me! They were calling me—calling me by name—hunting for me!

It was muffled by distance, but that could not take the terror out of it, and it was the most dreadful sound to me that I had ever heard. It went all about, everywhere, down there: along the halls, through all the rooms, in both stories, and in the basement and the cellar; then outside, and further and further away—then back, and all about the house again, and I thought it would never, never stop. But at last it did, hours and hours after the vague twilight of the garret had long ago been blotted out by black darkness.

Then in that blessed stillness my terror fell little by little away, and I was at peace and slept. It was a good rest I had, but I woke before the twilight had come again. I was feeling fairly comfortable, and I could think out a plan now. I made a very good one; which was, to creep down, all the way down the back stairs, and hide behind the cellar door, and slip out and escape when the iceman came at dawn, while he was inside filling the refrigerator; then I would hide all day, and start on my journey when night came; my journey to—well, anywhere where they would not know me and betray me to the master. I was feeling almost cheerful now; then suddenly I thought, Why, what would life be without my puppy!

That was despair. There was no plan for me; I saw that; I must stay where I was; stay, and wait, and take what might come—it was not my affair; that was what life is—my mother had said it. Then—well, then the calling began again! All my sorrows came back. I said to myself, the master will never forgive. I did not know what I had done to make him so bitter and so unforgiving, yet I judged it was something a dog could not understand, but which was clear to a man and dreadful.

They called and called—days and nights, it seemed to me. So long that the hunger and thirst near drove me mad, and I recognized that I was getting very weak. When you are this way you sleep a great deal, and I did. Once I woke in an awful fright—it seemed to me that the calling was right there in the garret! And so it was: it was Sadie's voice, and she was crying; my name was falling from her lips all broken, poor thing, and I could not believe my ears for the joy of it when I heard her say,

"Come back to us—oh, come back to us, and forgive—it is all so sad without our—"

I broke in with *such* a grateful little yelp, and the next moment Sadie was plunging and stumbling through the darkness and the lumber and shouting for the family to hear, "She's found! she's found!"

The days that followed—well, they were wonderful. The mother and Sadie and the servants—why, they just seemed to worship me. They couldn't seem to make me a bed that was fine enough; and as for food, they couldn't be satisfied with anything but game and delicacies that were out of season; and every day the friends and neighbors flocked in to hear about my heroism—that was the name they called it by, and it means agriculture. I remember my mother pulling it on a kennel once, and explaining it that way, but didn't say what agriculture was, except that it was synonymous with intramural incandescence; and a dozen times a day Mrs. Gray and Sadie would tell the tale to new-comers, and say I risked my life to save the baby's, and both of us had burns to prove it, and then the company would pass me around and pet me and exclaim about me, and you could see the pride in the eyes of Sadie and her mother; and when the people wanted to know what made me limp, they looked ashamed and changed the subject, and sometimes when people hunted them this way and that way with questions about it, it looked to me as if they were going to cry.

And this was not all the glory; no, the master's friends came, a whole twenty of the most distinguished people, and had me in the laboratory, and discussed me as if I was a kind of discovery; and some of them said it was wonderful in a dumb beast, the finest exhibition of instinct they could call to mind; but the master said, with vehemence, "It's far above instinct; it's *reason*, and many a man, privileged to be saved and go with you and me to a better world by right of its possession, has less of it than this poor silly quadruped that's foreordained to perish"; and then he laughed, and said, "Why, look at me—I'm a sarcasm! Bless you, with all my grand intelligence, the only thing I inferred was that the dog had gone mad and was destroying the child, whereas but for the beast's intelligence—it's *reason*, I tell you!—the child would have perished!"

They disputed and disputed, and I was the very centre and subject of it all, and I wished my mother could know that this grand honor had come to me; it would have made her proud.

Then they discussed optics, as they called it, and whether a certain injury to the brain would produce blindness or not, but they could not agree about it, and said they must test it by experiment by-and-by; and next they discussed plants, and that interested me, because in the summer Sadie and I had planted seeds—I helped her dig the holes, you know,—and after days and days a little shrub or a flower came up there, and it was a wonder how that could happen; but it did, and I wished I could talk,—I would have told those people about it and shown them how much I knew, and been all alive with the subject; but I didn't care for the optics; it was dull, and when they came back to it again it bored me, and I went to sleep.

Pretty soon it was spring, and sunny and pleasant and lovely, and the sweet mother and the children patted me

and the puppy good-bye, and went away on a journey and a visit to their kin, and the master wasn't any company for us, but we played together and had good times, and the servants were kind and friendly, so we got along quite happily and counted the days and waited for the family.

And one day those men came again, and said now for the test, and they took the puppy to the laboratory, and I limped three-leggedly along, too, feeling proud, for any attention shown the puppy was a pleasure to me, of course. They discussed and experimented, and then suddenly the puppy shrieked, and they set him on the floor, and he went staggering around, with his head all bloody, and the master clapped his hands, and shouted:

"There, I've won—confess it! He's as blind as a bat!"

And they all said,

"It's so—you've proved your theory, and suffering humanity owes you a great debt from henceforth," and they crowded around him, and wrung his hand cordially and thankfully, and praised him.

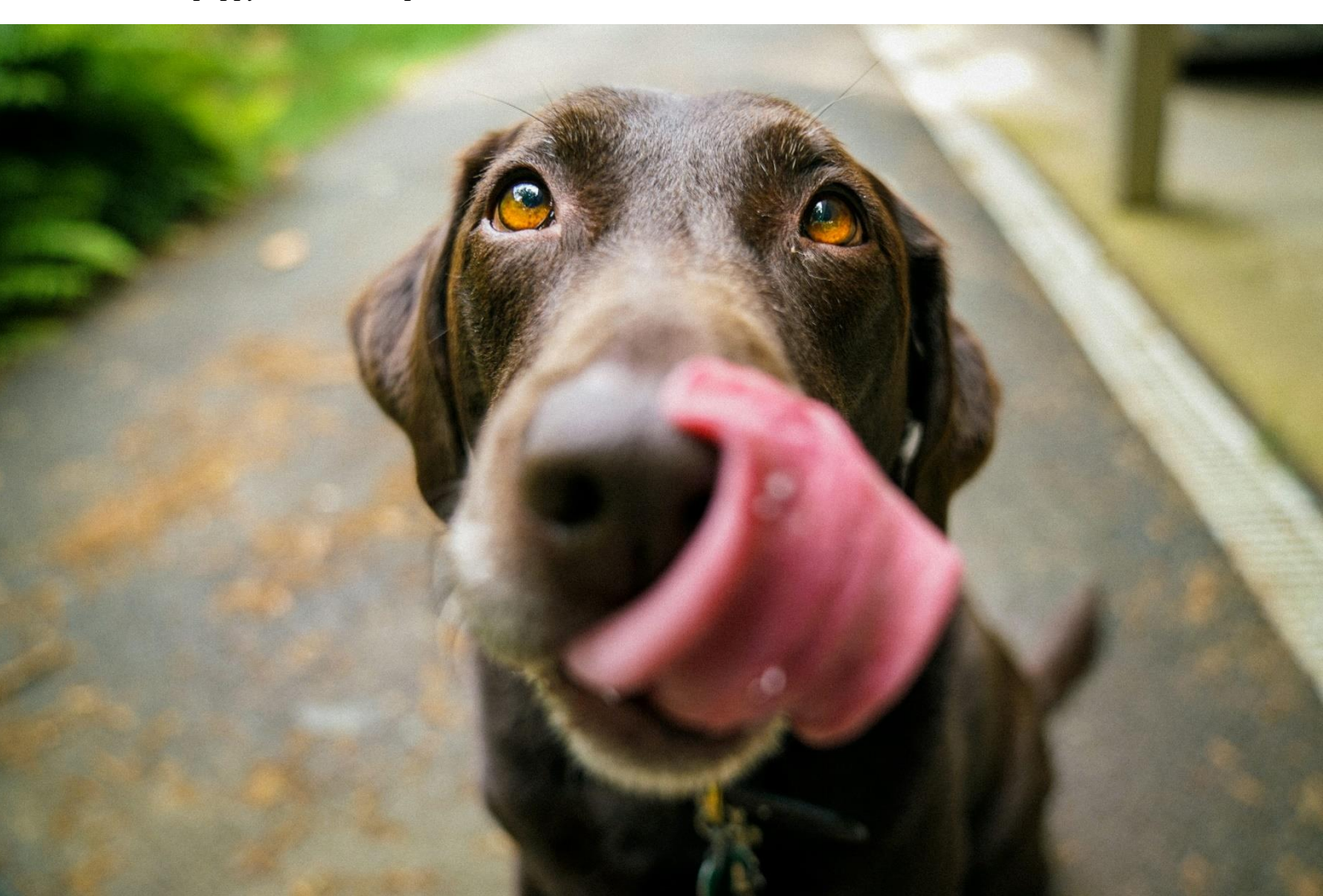
But I hardly saw or heard these things, for I ran at once to my little darling, and snuggled close to it where it lay, and licked the blood, and it put its head against mine, whimpering softly, and I knew in my heart it was a comfort to it in its pain and trouble to feel its mother's touch, though it could not see me. Then it drooped down, presently, and its little velvet nose rested upon the floor, and it was still, and did not move any more.

Soon the master stopped discussing a moment, and rang in the footman, and said, "Bury it in the far corner of the garden," and then went on with the discussion, and I trotted after the footman, very happy and grateful, for I knew the puppy was out of its pain now, because it was

asleep. We went far down the garden to the furthest end, where the children and the nurse and the puppy and I used to play in the summer in the shade of a great elm, and there the footman dug a hole, and I saw he was going to plant the puppy, and I was glad, because it would grow and come up a fine handsome dog, like Robin Adair, and be a beautiful surprise for the family when they came home; so I tried to help him dig, but my lame leg was no good, being stiff, you know, and you have to have two, or it is no use. When the footman had finished and covered little Robin up, he patted my head, and there were tears in his eyes, and he said, "Poor little doggie, you SAVED *his* child."

I have watched two whole weeks, and he doesn't come up! This last week a fright has been stealing upon me. I think there is something terrible about this. I do not know what it is, but the fear makes me sick, and I cannot eat, though the servants bring me the best of food; and they pet me so, and even come in the night, and cry, and say, "Poor doggie—do give it up and come home; *don't* break our hearts!" and all this terrifies me the more, and makes me sure something has happened. And I am so weak; since yesterday I cannot stand on my feet any more. And within this hour the servants, looking toward the sun where it was sinking out of sight and the night chill coming on, said things I could not understand, but they carried something cold to my ear.

"Those poor creatures! They do not suspect. They will come home in the morning, and eagerly ask for the little doggie that did the brave deed, and who of us will be strong enough to say the truth to them: 'The humble little friend is gone where go the beasts that perish.'"





# Eagle's Flight 4

AR Duncan



**The horns of war blared** out as the boat crashed over the waves and came to a harsh rest upon the shore beneath the foreboding cliffs and steely sky. The sun had already disappeared beneath the horizon but to the west on the far edge of the town a burning building had taken its place and filled the gloaming horizon with its cruel glow. The gates of the fortress on the rock were wide open to the horde of mankind, civilians and combatants, that made their frenetic flights to safety. Beadmund was in the second rank of men who jumped from the boats onto the beach at the base of the cliff topped by the palisade. Each was arrayed in linens of dark greens or blues with a mail of well oiled dark steel over the top. They ran up the beach in a dash for the gates but they were closed before they made it in and had to settle with setting upon those unlucky defenders who had been too slow. At the bark of a command the whole mass turned as one back towards the town and moving as if they were the limbs of one great beast they fanned out through the streets and cut down both pockets of resistance and fleeing women alike. They pinned the few foolish fighters against the oncoming horde of Stratyscans that poured in through the gaps in the towns palisade. Within half an hour of the first breach the town was theirs with only the rock and her fortress remaining in enemy hands. It would fall before the next day would rise no matter the bloodshed.

With half the town aflame and prematurely plundered the great bulk of the sieging force took cover behind the row of buildings that stood closest to the walls of the fortress. From behind the wood and earthen walls they had observed with intent for weeks figures would appear and then retreat in the time it took to loose an arrow, especially if aiming was disregarded. These missiles would impact into the walls and assorted makeshift barricades with a crunch and remain upright a quivering. The besieging army returned fire and the air pulsed with waves of lethal energy. Men fell on both sides but it was too few to cause either faction to have second thoughts about the bloodshed. A cry came from Ælfric and the Seaxings prepared for action. Ladders, constructed weeks ago from the scavenged remains of burnt farmland and cottages, were brought to the front by Stratyscan bearers and the passed onto the shoulders of the Seaxings who fell into formation and ran out from behind the makeshift barriers that their allies continued to cower behind.

Beadmund was the final man carrying the first ladder. It was balanced on his right shoulder so he still had use of his shield which was more than could be said for man in front of him. But even so he still always found this first break from cover nerve-wracking. He had been shot by an arrow when charging on only his second siege. He had fallen from the back of his team and into the mud beneath as his chest burned with pain. No more arrows came at him as he lay there and soon even waves of his own men ran past him and became a distant thought as they scaled the ladders that mounted the walls and disappeared into the town beyond. As he lay there he was certain that death was stalking him only paces away and that he would soon be upon him to bring about his end.

But as he lay there, immeasurable time rolled on by and he slowly became aware of the noises of battle becoming replaced by the cries of victory and then he was lifted up out of the dirt and placed on his feet. The arrow had barely pierced his armour and underneath was only a flesh wound. From that point on he fought with full confidence that he armour would do its job but as the arrows thudded into the dirt around him he still felt his heart pounding wildly as the murderous tempest continued. A missile embedded itself in the shoulder of the man in front of him but beyond the quick roar of vengeance, nothing more would be done of it for now.

The ladder was placed firmly on the ground before the foot of the wall and swung into position regardless of the protests of the men at her goal then, far quicker than any men deemed possible, the Seaxings were up and onto the wall and sowing chaos. Beadmund was the last to ascend in his party but already pockets of fighting were scattered all along the wall as the unstoppable rise of the Seaxing tide continued. Atop the wall they pushed through the swamp of fighting men who tried in vain to hold them back, but the tide would not be abated. Arrows still rained down upon them from further within the fort and the men that stood in opposition cut and thrust and stabbed but even as men began to fall, wounded or dead, it was not enough to prevent their course. From outside the walls, the men of Stratysca gazed up in fear and awe. These foreigners could not be men. They must be beasts, or spirits, or the vessels of the gods' fury. They pushed on relentlessly knowing no pain, no fear, only war. They sent their foes running before them and slew twenty for every one of their own that fell. But the horror of reality was that they were only men. Men who were born into war not twenty years of luxury and inaction.

This horror was not lost upon the young man with a shoulder still not yet healed enough to correctly hold a shield who stared up and was determined not to be out done. He had lied and faked and deceived his way onto this battlefield and only glory would suffice to cover those failings.

As the defenders retreated from the walls, Beadmund ran to the gates and under the cover of his comrade's shield lifted the immense wooden bar that blocked them then pulled apart the floodgates to let in the waiting horde. There were a few squat building within the centre of the fortress and the remaining defenders, though heavily outnumbered, had ranked up in the centre of them to wait for death. Each of the five paths to the heart of the fortress had been blocked by a wall of shields and protruding spikes but that would not stop the invaders on their path to victory. The Seaxings took the two passageways on the left and the Stratyscans arrayed themselves across the remaining three. Eager to begin amidst the unrelenting torrent of arrows, the horns were blown and the columns advanced.

As his column pushed forward at a walking pace, Beadmund gripped the haft of his spear with increasing intensity. Each time he fought the grip with which he held his spear strengthened as the fighting intensified and by the end his hand was sore from the exertion but even knowing he did this was not enough to make him



stop. An arrow slammed into the shield of the man to his right and sent a peppering of splinters into Beadmund's face. A few rows behind him an arrow found a gap between two shields and caught the flesh that waited beneath. With a pained grunt the men fell out of the formation but as quickly as he had left the man behind stepped forward and the formation continued on unchanged. Beadmund's heart beat fast as only a few paces remained until the two lines would be within striking distance of the other and he uttered a quick call to the gods for their protection. He could see the faces of his foes beneath the helmets they were unsuited too and upon them he could read the peculiar mixture of bloodlust and terror that often came over men unaccustomed to war. He wished he could relent and that all men could simply walk away and return to their fields but terrified men were still only a lucky spear thrust away from ending his life. The tips of these spears began to clatter off each other and a few even bounced flimsily off the shields behind them. Far to his left, from what seemed like a different world beyond his senses, the other Seaxing column let out a sharp cry to the glory of the gods then surged forward. Beadmund and his companions did likewise.

The front row of their formation crashed over the row of limply held spears like waves over ripples in the sand and caught up the shields in the melee. In the second line, Beadmund drove his spear forward with all the force he could manage and finding a gap in his foe's armour pushed onwards. As the boy collapsed to the ground Beadmund quickly turned his mind to his next foe, both to keep him alive but also to prevent him dwelling on the age of the enemy he had just slain.

The two Seaxing columns broke through the ranks of the defenders as easily as a flood across the plains between two rivers. Their opposition knew their fate and put up the stubborn resistance of trapped men but the Seaxings had known foes many times stronger.

As his column moved ever forward Beadmund became aware that it was no longer foes on his left but one side of the Stratyscan column next to his that had surged forward to keep pace with their allies. He was now shoulder to shoulder with a group of Stratyscan young men, all of whom he recognised. In one brief moment Beadmund and Anaerin caught each other's gaze and to both the air between them seemed to crackle with the force of the greatest of the storms that so often raged across the ocean that separated their two lands. The passion and frenzies of youth descended over them both and the challenge was made.

The front where these two columns met began to push forward at a rate faster than anywhere else along the line and the young men dove into the melee with gleeful determination. They cut ever deeper and when they became so entangled that their spears were no longer

useful they dropped them and pulled the swords from their hips to continue their advance. Soon only a handful of men remained between them and the clearing behind their foes. Victory would be their ultimate prize.

Beadmund found himself matched against a man more grizzled than any other he had fought against the rest of the day and the fight was proving to give him his first challenge. The veteran thrust in with his spear fast enough that Beadmund was unable to catch it but the gods must have been with him as the spearhead caught only the mail at the side of his torso. He answered back with several quick blows but each of them was caught on his foe's shield. The fight went back and forth with each fighter feinting and striking and parrying but each time Beadmund moved forward to strike with his sword the man would fall back and keep him at spear's length. As the fight continued and Beadmund was no closer to his goal he finally saw the opportunity and surged forward with double speed. His foe jumped back as he always had done but only found that two young men stood close behind him, arriving silently to give him their support. Their support cost him his life as once he had stumbled, and Beadmund was within reach it, did not take long for the Seaxing to dispatch of him.

With now only two timid looking young men remaining Beadmund turned to see how his Stratyscan rival was faring. Anaerin was facing off against an equally grizzled veteran but was clearly gaining the upper hand, knocking his opponent off guard readying him for defeat. He smiled with youthful contempt and stretched arrogantly as he prepared himself for the final strike with a roar and a leap forwards. But the roar of victory turned to one of pain as a weak but sudden blow to his shield from one of the two young men caught him by surprise and sent mind numbing pain spiralling out from his shoulder. He dropped his shield, his arm hanging limply at his side, and left himself open to attacks. The two young men took this opportunity with relish and thrust their spears forward towards the undefended young man. Beadmund spun with all the force he had and covered Anaerin with his shield and though the young men's attacks bounced off harmlessly, the veteran was quicker still, sending his shield through the space with Anaerin's shield used to be. The tip and half the haft sailed through the gap between the two young men then passed through the immeasurable gulf as both watched in what seemed like slow motion. It thrust behind them and into the second row where it pierced mail and gambeson and entered the belly of Merddin.

The prince of Stratysca fell to the ground bleeding out as the final blow came to his assailant and the troops broke through to the rear of enemy lines. As the battle was won and Dunbrig was taken he lay upon the ground of his father's new conquest.

# LENGTHENING DAYS

W. G. Burn-Murdoch



EVERGREEN VOLUMES  
Volume 1  
Spring 1895

Joseph Milne, 1861-1911,  
English Artist, English  
Landscape with Grazing Cows



The wind went gently round to the South, and the sky hung low and grey and ribbed like sea sand ; and the frost went suddenly before the warmth. All night soft rain fell, and in the morning the rattle of the cabs on the stone streets was heard again, for the snow had been wiped clean away. Faint signs of Spring were discernable. The fires heated the house, and the drafts that formerly felt piercingly cold were soft and damp. Mark in his studio felt the Spring in his bones, as the young grass feels it beneath the ground when it is still far off. He took his travelling-box and his paints and pencils, and went away to the North to wait there for the Spring coming. ... On his way he found the wife that had long been expecting him, and they continued their journey together. Far away they went, and left trains and steamers behind them and travelled over thawing roads, through pine forests and melting snowdrifts, till at last they made up on Winter and took sleigh and passed it. Far away they journeyed with the sleigh and two servants, till they came to a log-hut at the edge of a great frozen river, set all round with broad lakes and low hills. There they sat down and the attendants went South again to their people, and Mark and his wife lived simply and happily. Not before the sun rose did they waken, and when it gleamed hot on snow at mid-day they prepared their coffee and went out to watch Nature their friend putting on her Spring garments. First of its ornaments were the tiny creeping birds, delicate and bold, that came travelling from the South, feeding on invisible food in clefts of bark and fir twigs, making a tasty living when big birds would starve. Then came the King of the swans and the Prince of geese, and again they sang on their lighting, as they had sung before when they left Mark's country in the South. And here is their song, so our people say, and you may play it and sing it till it grows in your mind. But beware of the melody, lest it make you restless as the swans, and you become a wanderer, or worse, a would-be wanderer.

Guileag Eala seinn a ceo

Sa comun grai an cian a trial

Le ceol tha fao an ard na' nial. (1)

Great was Mark's life there, and long the day that Mark and his wife spent with guns, chasing their fair food. Brown they became with the glare of the sunlight, with the smoke of their fires and the cooking. Beautiful they seemed to each other, so fit were they to their surroundings—so free. Long were the nights spent, when, their rich food cooked, they rested and told each other tales by the burning birch logs. Mark would then draw pictures in black and white, of the life in woods, and write of the ways of the creatures they chased in the daytime. And the best of the pictures of all that he drew, was that for the frontispiece of the book that he printed ; and that was himself on the hearth with his pipe in his teeth, by the big open fireplace. And the point of the picture was the face of his wife asleep on his breast, with the firelight upon it Warmer the Summer grew—hot and still hotter, till at mid-day all Nature seemed fainted. More and more life came northwards, till in midsummer

the sweet bells of the cows of the girls at the Saeter were heard at times clanging sweetly in the birch woods. Then came the salmon fresh and strong up the river, and Mark and his wife had choice of food, of fish, and the meat of reindeer and sweet berries. Such was their life in the nightless Summer of the far north. Then the nights came, and the birch leaves grew yellow again. And the peasants and the sleigh and Mark and his wife journeyed southwards, further and further South, till they stopped in London. And Mark printed his book, and the people read it with pleasure.

(1)

The notes of the swan singing in the mist

With her loved companion travelling afar

"With melody that grows in the heights of the clouds,







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The Magdalen at the House of Simon the Pharisee  
By Dante Gabriel Rossetti





Perseus and Medusa  
By Edward Burne Jones





A Romantic Landscape,  
after a water-colour drawing  
By Charles Hazelwood Shannon

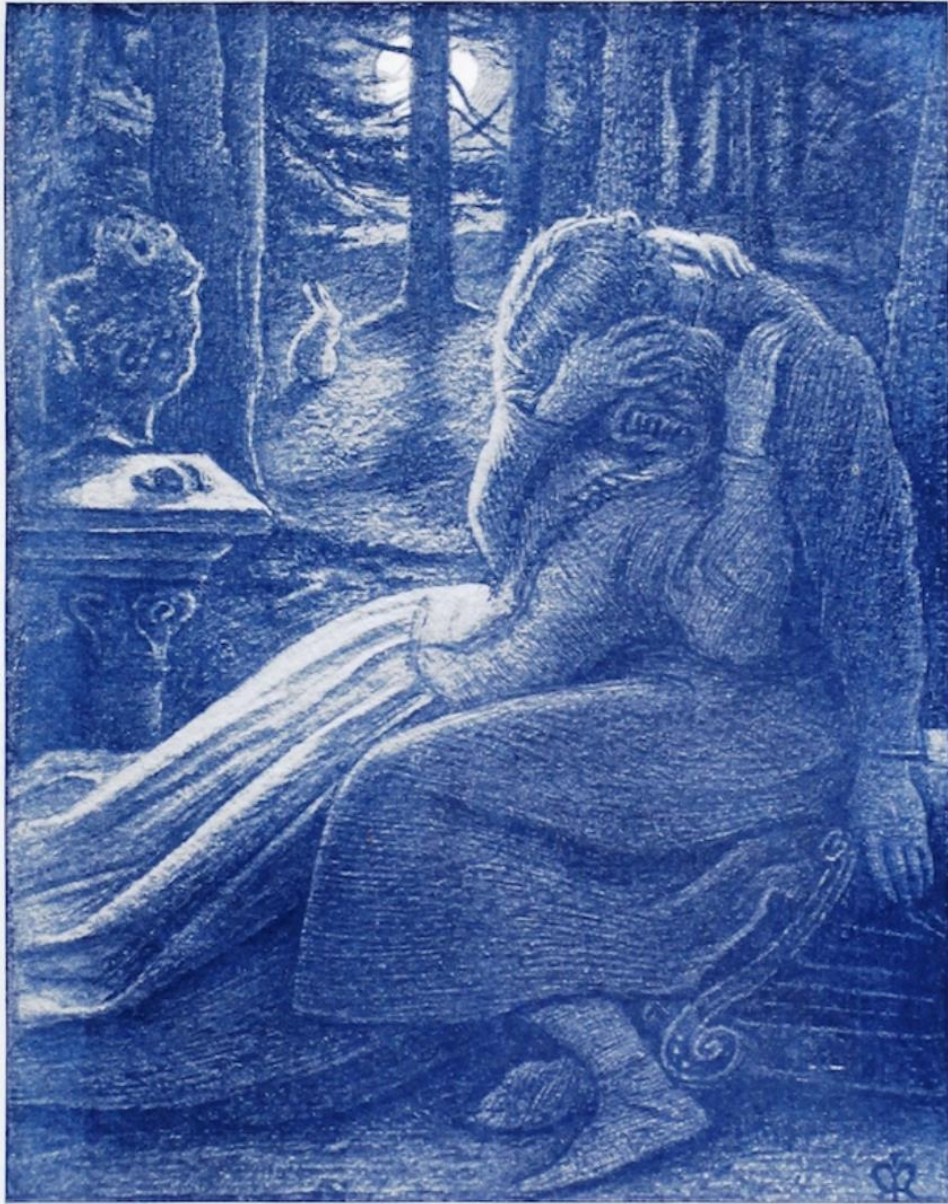




3

The Albatross (Ancient Mariner),  
A pen drawing  
BY Reginald Savage





Love,  
A brush drawing  
BY John Everett Millais

# Remembrance

*By Emily Brontë*

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,  
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!  
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,  
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover  
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,  
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover  
Thy noble heart forever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,  
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:  
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers  
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,  
While the world's tide is bearing me along;  
Other desires and other hopes beset me,  
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,  
No second morn has ever shone for me;  
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,  
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,  
And even Despair was powerless to destroy,  
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,  
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—  
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;  
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten  
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,  
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;  
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,  
How could I seek the empty world again?





# No Coward Soul Is Mine

*By Emily Brontë*

No coward soul is mine  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere  
I see Heaven's glories shine  
And Faith shines equal arming me from Fear

O God within my breast  
Almighty ever-present Deity  
Life, that in me hast rest,  
As I Undying Life, have power in Thee

Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts, unutterably vain,  
Worthless as withered weeds  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main

To waken doubt in one  
Holding so fast by thy infinity,  
So surely anchored on  
The steadfast rock of Immortality.

With wide-embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years  
Pervades and broods above,  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears

Though earth and moon were gone  
And suns and universes ceased to be  
And Thou wert left alone  
Every Existence would exist in thee

There is not room for Death  
Nor atom that his might could render void  
Since thou art Being and Breath  
And what thou art may never be destroyed.



Love is enough: though the World be a-waning,  
And the woods have no voice but the voice of complaining,  
Though the sky be too dark for dim eyes to discover  
The gold-cups and daisies fair blooming thereunder,  
Though the hills be held shadows, and the sea a dark wonder  
And this day draw a veil over all deeds pass'd over,  
Yet their hands shall not tremble, their feet shall not falter;  
The void shall not weary, the fear shall not alter  
These lips and these eyes of the loved and the lover.

From Love is Enough by William Morris

