

Colours - poems

Roses are red, violets are blue
The honey's sweet and so are you

first cited in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* 1590

[SEP]

Overheard on a Saltmarsh

[SEP]

Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?
Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?
Give them me.

No.

Give them me. Give them me.

No.

Then I will howl all night in the reeds,
Lie in the mud and howl for them.
Goblin, why do you love them so?
They are better than stars or water,
Better than voices of winds that sing,
Better than any man's fair daughter,
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.
Hush, I stole them out of the moon.
Give me your beads, I want them.

No.

I will howl in the deep lagoon
For your green glass beads, I love them so.
Give them me. Give them.

No.

Harold Monroe (1879 - 1932)

[SEP]

***Blackberry Picking* by Seamus Heaney**

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50981/blackberry-picking>

[SEP]

A Pink Wool Knitted Dress

[SEP]

In your pink wool knitted dress
Before anything had smudged anything You stood at the altar.
Bloomsday.
Rain – so that a just-bought umbrella Was the only furnishing about
me Newer than three years inured.
My tie – sole, drab, veteran RAF black – Was the used-up symbol of a
tie.
My chord jacket – thrice-dyed black, exhausted, Just hanging on to

itself.

Remaining Ti

I was a post-war, utility son-in-law!

Not quite the Frog-Prince. Maybe the Swineherd

Stealing this daughter's pedigree dreams

From under her watchtowered searchlit future. No ceremony could
conscript me

Out of my uniform. I wore my whole wardrobe –

Except for the odd, spare, identical item.

My wedding, like Nature, wanted to hide.

However, – if we were going to be married

It had better be Westminster Abbey. Why not?

The Dean told us why not. That is how

I learned that I had a Parish Church.

St George of the Chimney Sweeps.

So we squeezed into marriage finally.

Your mother, brave even in this

US Foreign Affairs gamble.

Acted all bridesmaids and all guests,

Even – magnanimity – represented

My family

[[[
SEP]]]

Who had heard nothing about it.

I had invited only their ancestors .

I had not even confided my theft of you

To a closest friend. For best man – my squire

To hold the meanwhile rings –

We requisitioned the sexton. Twist the outrage:

He was packing children into a bus,

Taking them to the Zoo – in that downpour!

All the prison animals had to be patient

While we married.

You were transfigured.

So slender and new and naked,

A nodding spray of wet lilac.

You shook, you sobbed with joy, you were ocean depth

Brimming with God.

You said you saw the heavens open

And show riches, ready to drop upon us.

Levitated beside you, I stood subjected

To a strange tense: the spellbound future.

[[[
SEP]]]

Ted Hughes

[[[
SEP]]]

Colours by **Christina Rossetti** - an animation

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z74n6v4/articles/zv7q>

wty

[[[
SEP]]]

Nocturne

And we shall bathe, my love, in the presence of Africa.
Furnishings from Guinea and the Congo, heavy and
burnished, calm and dark.

Masks, pure and primeval, on the walls, distant but
so present!

Ebony thrones for ancestral guests, the Princes of the
hill country.

Musky perfumes, thick grass mats of silence,
Shadowed cushions for leisure, the sound of a spring -
of peace.

Mythic language; and far-off songs, voices woven like
the strip cloths of the Sudan.

And then, dear lamp, your kindness in cradling the
obsession with this presence,

[L]
:SEP:

Black, white and red: oh! red like the earth of Africa.

[L]
:SEP:

Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906-2001)

[L]
:SEP:

[L]
:SEP:

Translated by Gerard Benson

[L L]
:SEP:SEP:

Silver by **Walter De La Mère**

<https://www.poemtree.com/poems/Silver.htm>

[L]
:SEP:

[L]
:SEP:

Summer pudding: a recipe in verse
for Carole Reeves

[L]
:SEP:

Begin with half a pound of strawberries
picked from the deep end of your sloping garden, where the
birds

play hopscotch in the dragged fruitnets; add
a quarter of redcurrants; gently seethe in orange juice
for six or seven minutes with some sugar,
giving the pan a ritual shake from time to time, inducing
a marriage of those fine, compatible
tastes; and leave to cool. An open kitchen door invites
whatever breeze will help itself to flavour, attenuating it
downhill across your neighbours' gardens
(be generous!) so summer will surprise them,
an unidentifiable recalled fulfilment haunting

the giant bellflower and the scarlet runners.
Now introduce your strawberries, slice to let the pallid
heartsflesh
transfuse its juice into the mass, transmute
cooled fruit to liquid crystal while you line your bowl with
bread
and add the mixture - keeping back some juice -
lid it with bread, cover and weight it, chill it if you like
(as if the winter took a hand) and hoard it,
opus magnum ripening its secret, edible
inviolable time. And when you dare
slide your knife round its socket to uncoiling - a sudden suck

-
this gelid Silbury, mined with the wealth
of an archetypal summer, let it be on one of three
occasions: for a kitchenful of children
whose mouths grow purpleringed and flecked with whipped
cream as they dig
and lose, entranced, the treasure of the minute;
or for the friends around your polished table, when that soft
lake of mahogany reflects the faces
melting in candlelight and burgundy, rivers of talk
eddying to a stillness lost in taste
primitive as a language, clear as thought; or for whoever
will join you in your garden when the sun
carries out summer to the edge of dark, and stay to eat
there in the early chill as twilight gels
and owl hoots quiver from the gulf of darkness, where a
floodlit
cathedral floats under your eyes, and still
(wreckage of smeared plates and clotted spoons piling the
table)
after the lights are killed and the cathedral
vanished like a switched off hologram, remain to plot
the moon's progress across the brimming air
scaled by the nightscented stocks, or with binoculars
arrest the Brownian movement of the stars.

Grevel Lindop

[L]
[SEP]

My Heart Leaps Up

[L]
[SEP]

My heart leaps up when I behold [L] A rainbow in the [SEP]

sky; So was it when my life began; So is it now I am a
man; So be it when I shall grow old, Or let me
die! The Child is father of the Man; And I could wish my
days to be Bound each to each by natural piety.

W Wordsworth

[L]
[SEP]

Inverkirkaig Bay

Colour is comment of the cheating eye.
This bay, these islands walk themselves away
(When I have put my lust of looking by
And sink unnoticed into my natural tray)
To an odd world where senses never pry.

[L]
[SEP]

Even shape that advertises any man
Is lies to let us know him. That woman there,
Black on the steep road down to Badnaban,
Carts a whole fiction with her through the air
Whose shape's its title, reading 'Katie Ann'.

[L]
[SEP]

The sea trout nosing in along the shore
Taste the fresh water and the spawning beds.
They leap from their world into this, explore
A hidden sense of themselves and drive their heads
Into a knowledge they've not had before.

[L]
[SEP]

Sunrise and moonrise quietly get on
With their true miracles, which are never seen
For these explosions which we dote upon.
The roe deer hides in more than the bracken's green,
And round the stone gathers the sheltering stone.

[L]
[SEP]

But such a green and such a shape in air
That with blunt fists boxes the sea away!
Such clarity of seeming can declare
More than my utter self to me, who say
In clouds of words, less than that false cloud there.

Norman McCaig

September 1956

Warning

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple^[L]With a red hat which
doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.^[SEP]And I shall spend my pension on
brandy and summer gloves^[SEP]And satin sandals, and say we've no
money for butter.^[SEP]I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm
tired^[SEP]And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells^[SEP]And
run my stick along the public railings^[SEP]And make up for the sobriety of
my youth.^[SEP]I shall go out in my slippers in the rain^[SEP]And pick flowers
in other people's gardens^[SEP]And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat^[SEP]And eat three pounds
of sausages at a go^[SEP]Or only bread and pickle for a week^[SEP]And hoard
pens and pencils and beer mats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry^[SEP]And pay our rent and
not swear in the street^[SEP]And set a good example for the children.^[SEP]We
must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practise a little now?^[SEP]So people who know me
are not too shocked and surprised^[SEP]When suddenly I am old, and start
to wear purple.

[L]
[SEP]

Jenny Joseph

The tale of Custard the Dragon

Belinda lived in a little white house
With a little black kitten and a little gray mouse,
And a little yellow dog and a little red wagon,
And a realio trulio little pet dragon.
Now the name of the little black kitten was ink,
And the little gray mouse she called Blink,
And the little yellow dog was sharp as Mustard,
But the dragon was a coward, and she called him Custard.

[L]
[SEP]

from *The Golden Treasury of Poetry* collected by **Louis
Untermeyer**^[L]^[SEP]

Illumination: on the track by Loch Fewin

Suddenly the sun poured
through an arrow-slit in the clouds

and the great hall we walked in - its tapestries
of mountains and parquet of rich
bogland and water - blazed on the eye
like the Book of Kells.

For four days a cloud
Had sat like a lid on the round
horizon. But now
we walked in a mediaeval manuscript -
doves flew over the thorn, the serpent
of wisdom whispered
In our skulls and our hands
were transparent with love.

Norman McCaig

May 1965

[L]
[SEP]

*The shipwreck of Ulysses, in the fifth book of the Odyssey,
translated by different writers and discussed in Adam Nicholson's
The Mighty Dead:*

[L]
[SEP]

Nicholson gives a fairly literal translation from Homer:

[L]
[SEP]

... he then bent both knees
and his strong hands-and-arms; for sea had killed his heart.
Swollen all his flesh, while sea oozed much
up through mouth and nostrils, he then breathless and
speechless
lay scarcely-capable, terrible weariness came to him.

[L]
[SEP]

This is by Chapman:

[L]
[SEP]

Then forth he came, his both knees faltering, both
His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth
His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath
Spent to all use, and down he sank to death.

The sea had soak'd his heart through.

[L]
[SEP]

and this by Pope:

[L]
[SEP]

... his knees no more
Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld
His swoln heart heaved; his boated body swell'd.
From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran;
And lost in lassitude lay all the man.

[L]
[SEP]

From The Mighty Dead by Adam Nicholson

[L]
[SEP]

Colors by The Black Pumas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0G383538qzQ>

[L]
[SEP]

*An extract from Simon Armitage's translation of **Sir Gawain and the Green Knight***

[L]
[SEP]

Now, on the subject of supper I'll say no more
as it's obvious to everyone that no one went without.
Because another sound, a new sound, suddenly drew near,
which might signal the king to sample his supper,
for barely had the horns finished blowing their breath
and with starters just spooned to the seated guests,
a fearful form appeared, framed in the door;
a mountain of a man, immeasurably high,
a hulk of a human from head to hips,
so long and thick in his loins and his limbs
I should genuinely judge him to be a half-giant,
or a most massive men, the mightiest of mortals.
But handsome too, like any horseman worth his horse,
for despite the bulk and brawn of his body
his stomach and waist were slender and sleek.
In fact in all features he was finely formed
it seemed.

Amazement seized their minds,
no soul had ever seen
a knight of such a kind -
entirely emerald green.

[L]
[SEP]

Trailer for the 2021 film version of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

[L]
[SEP]

https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=580877352&rlz=1C5C HFA_enGB912GB912&sxsrf=AM9HkKISghLmb66aVD2q0ZOH3 SHlzF9knQ:1699547539563&q=sir+gawain+and+the+green+knight&tbm=vid&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwilm__6q7eCAxVhUkEAHaAmD2oQ0pQJegQIDhAB&biw=1440&bih=762&dpr=1#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:56267bbf,vid:sS6ksY8xWCY,st:0

[L]
[SEP]

Crab Apple Jelly

[L]
[SEP]

Every year you said it wasn't worth the trouble -
you'd better things to do with your time -
and it made you furious when the jars
were sold at the church fête
for less than the cost of the sugar.

[L]
[SEP]

And every year you drove into the lanes around Calverton to
search
for the wild trees whose apples
looked as red and as sweet as cherries,
and tasted sharper than gooseberries.

[L]
[SEP]

You cooked them in the wide copper pan
grandma brought with her from Wigan,
smashing them against the sides
with a long wooden spoon to split
the skins, straining the pulp

[L]
[SEP]

through an old muslin nappy.
It hung for days, tied with a string
to the kitchen steps, dripping
into a bowl on the floor -
brown-stained, horrible,

[L]
[SEP]

a head in a bag, a pouch
of sourness, of all that went wrong
in that house of women. The last drops
you wrung out with your hands;
then, closing doors and windows

[L]
[SEP]

to shut out the clamouring wasps,
you boiled up the juice with sugar,
dribbling the syrup onto a cold plate
until it set to a glaze,
filling the heated jars.

[L]
[SEP]

When they were cool
you held one up to the light
to see if the jelly had clear.
Oh Mummy, it was as clear and shining
as stained glass and the colour of fire.

[L]
[SEP]

Vicki Feaver

[L]
[SEP]

Winter Song

[L]
[SEP]

The browns, the olives, and the yellows died,
And were swept up to heaven; where they glowed
Each dawn and set of sun till Christmastide.
And when the land lay pale for them, pale-snowed,
Fell back, and down the snow-drifts flamed and
flowed.

[L]
[SEP]

From off your face, into the winds of winter,
The sun-brown and the summer-gold are blowing;
But they shall gleam again with spiritual glinter,
When paler beauty on your brows falls snowing,
And through those snows my looks shall be
soft-going.

[L]
[SEP]

Wilfred Owen

[L]
[SEP]

Symphony in Yellow

[L]
[SEP]
[L]
[SEP]

An omnibus across the bridge Crawls like a yellow
butterfly, And, here and there, a passer-by Shows like
a little restless midge.

Big barges full of yellow hay Are moored against the
shadowy wharf, And, like a yellow silken scarf, The
thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade And flutter from the
Temple elms, And at my feet the pale green
Thames Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

Oscar Wilde

[L]
[SEP]

[L]
[SEP]

from Frost at Midnight

[L]
[SEP]

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night
Smokes in the sunthaw; whether the eve-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost

Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

[L]
[SEP]

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

[L]
[SEP]

[L]
[SEP]

[L]
[SEP]