

A song of life

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

In the rapture of life and of living,
I lift up my head and rejoice,
And I thank the great Giver for giving
The soul of my gladness a voice.
In the glow of the glorious weather,
In the sweet-scented, sensuous air,
My burdens seem light as a feather
They are nothing to bear.

In the strength and the glory of
power,
In the pride and the pleasure of
wealth
(For who dares dispute me my dower
Of talents and youth-time and
health?) ,
I can laugh at the world and its sages
I am greater than seers who are sad,
For he is most wise in all ages
Who knows how to be glad.

I lift up my eyes to Apollo,
The god of the beautiful days,
And my spirit soars off like a swallow,
And is lost in the light of its rays.

Are you troubled and sad? I beseech
you
Come out of the shadows of strife
Come out in the sun while I teach you
The secret of life.

Come out of the world – come above
it
Up over its crosses and graves,
Though the green earth is fair and I
love it,
We must love it as masters, not
slaves.

Come up where the dust never rises
But only the perfume of flowers
And your life shall be glad with
surprises
Of beautiful hours.
Come up where the rare golden wine
is
Apollo distills in my sight,
And your life shall be happy as mine
is,
And as full of delight.

After Apple-Picking

BY ROBERT FROST

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired

Of the great harvest I myself desired
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

Ambition

by Edgar Albert Guest

If you would rise above the throng
And seek the crown of fame,
You must do more than drift along
And merely play the game.
Whatever path your feet may tread,
Whatever be your quest,
The only way to get ahead
Is striving for the best.

'Tis not enough to wish to do
A day's toil fairly well;
If you would rise to glory, you
Must hunger to excel.
The boy who has the proper stuff
Goes into every test,
Not seeking to be "good enough,"
But eager to be "best."

Aim high! And though you fail today
And may tomorrow fail,
Keep pounding steadily away,
Some day you'll hit the nail.
At no half-way mark ever pause
In smug content to rest,
Who would win honor and applause
Must want to be the best.

The best must be your aim in life,
The best in sport or work,
Success in any form of strife
Falls never to the shirk.
The crowns of leadership are few,
The followers move in throngs,
If you would be a leader, you
Must shun the "drift alongs."

Funeral Blues

by W. H. Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the
telephone,

Prevent the dog from barking with a
juicy bone,

Silence the pianos and with muffled
drum

Bring out the coffin, let the mourners
come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning
overhead

Scribbling on the sky the message 'He
is Dead'.

Put crepe bows round the white
necks of the public doves,

Let the traffic policemen wear black
cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East
and West,

My working week and my Sunday rest,

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my
song;

I thought that love would last forever:
I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put
out every one,

Pack up the moon and dismantle the
sun,

Pour away the ocean and sweep up
the wood;

For nothing now can ever come to
any good.

As the Team's Head Brass

BY EDWARD THOMAS

As the team's head-brass flashed out on the turn
The lovers disappeared into the wood.
I sat among the boughs of the fallen elm
That strewed an angle of the fallow, and
Watched the plough narrowing a yellow square
Of charlock. Every time the horses turned
Instead of treading me down, the ploughman leaned
Upon the handles to say or ask a word,
About the weather, next about the war.
Scraping the share he faced towards the wood,
And screwed along the furrow till the brass flashed
Once more
The blizzard felled the elm whose crest
I sat in, by a woodpecker's round hole,
The ploughman said. "When will they take it away?"
"When the war's over." So the talk began-
One minute and an interval of ten,
A minute more and the same interval.
"Have you been out?" "No." "And don't want
to, perhaps ? "
If I could only come back again, I should
I could spare an arm. I shouldn't want to lose
A leg. If I should lose my head, why, so,
I should want nothing more..... Have many gone
From here?" "Yes," "Many lost?" Yes, a good few.
Only two teams work on the farm this year.
One of my mates dead. The second day
In France killed him. It was back in March,
The night of the blizzard, too. Now if

He had stayed here we should have moved the tree.
"And I should not have sat here. Everything
Would have been different. For it would have been
Another world." "Ay, and a better, though
If we could see all all might seem good." Then
The lovers came out of the wood again:
The horses started and for the last time
I watched the clods crumble and topple over
After the ploughshare and the stumbling team.

The Road Not Taken

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted
wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay in
leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I

kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.