

## **KING HAROLD**

When Harold went to Normandy  
He said a very foolish thing;  
That William should be England's king  
(He had gotten drunk on Burgundy).  
And when he woke he held his head  
In which a tribe of bees did hum  
And by a fear was overcome:  
Was that really what he had said??  
To William's cause had favour given  
The heirless Edward the Confessor;  
(Of all evils Will should be the lesser,  
Should his realm by rival earls be riven.)  
Then when the old King Edward died  
And William cried – "Mine is the crown!"  
The turncoat Harold let him down,  
To his young head that crown applied.  
And William shouted – "Zut alors!  
Honnait soit qui mal y pense!  
Five thousand men shall soon quit France  
To land upon that liar's shore!  
For 'e 'as built my 'opes up 'igh,  
And I 'ave made a thousand boasts  
My rule would span all English coasts.  
Now look a norman gorm shall I!"  
And stomping up his spiral stairs  
He kicked his dog and kicked his cat  
And in his servants' eyes he spat  
And yelled – "King 'arold say thy prayers!"  
And standing on a battlement  
And drawing forth his heavy sword  
In fury bellowed far abroad  
- "Thy scurvy braincase shall I dent!!!"

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Now, way up north a Viking horde  
Were looking for a place to pillage  
But found not one unpillaged village  
And, frankly, all were feeling bored...  
The sea was calm, to southward fair,  
So said one to his Lord Harada,  
- "At England launch a great armada,  
It won't take long to paddle there!"  
Harada said – "The coast is clear!  
I've always fancied subjecting  
Those English swine as Viking king.  
I like it. What a good idea!"

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So at her shoulders, at her feet  
Anglia faced these double dangers  
From warlike Norse and Norman strangers...  
Their vice might crush her in defeat.  
But Harold sat upon his throne  
Resplendently as head of state  
And all his might did contemplate  
Which he could exercise alone.  
He could make his men hop on one leg,  
Remove a churl's head at will,  
Unfunny jesters' blood could spill,  
Make any man for mercy beg.  
(Yet then he thought of King Cnut  
Who, showing the limits of his power,  
Which could not change the flood tide's hour,  
Did royal absurdities refute.)  
Still, as England's new crowned sovereign  
He decided he would have a feast  
To celebrate his powers increased;  
Yet in the background hovering,  
With sable hair and sable beard,  
A dark emissary of William,  
From Falaise, his domicilium  
In Normandy, had just appeared.  
When Harold saw this Norman count,  
With a sealed parchment in his hand,  
With an air of fiercest reprimand,  
Of fear he felt a large amount.  
Then he recalled that past carousing  
And the flapping of his loosened tongue.  
Had he offered what should not belong  
To Will, thereby his regal hopes arousing?  
Or had all been a drunken dream  
In which he gave a land away  
Whereover he had little sway?  
Who could such a pledge esteem?  
But when he broke that seal and read  
A threat which all his fears confirmed,  
Full sweaty on his chair he squirmed  
For all his peace of mind had fled.  
- "Arold!" – read the Norman text -  
"Get thy usurping arse away  
From England's throne this very day,  
Or thou shalt feel how we are vexed."  
The count said – "Even now there swarms  
On Norman beaches infantry;  
In ships a cruel inventory  
Of war awaits the bate of storms.

When she lies calm, that narrow sea,  
And a sun lies mirrored thereupon,  
Then from this isle shall I be gone  
To bring my duke thy wise decree -  
That thy rump has left this royal dais.  
He shall come as conqueror or king;  
As first, would devastation bring,  
As second, mercy, love and grace.  
Thou choosest what my master wears,  
His armour or a cloak of ermine,  
His apparel here shalt thou determine;  
In either would he come, he swears!"

Then Harold looked around the room  
Still resounding with this threat,  
Where many a follower did fret  
To contemplate their sovereign's doom,  
And theirs, for William was renowned  
For cruelty and laying waste  
To cities not to Norman taste...  
As king, they knew, he would be crowned.  
When Harold spoke they strained to hear.  
His voice was soft but very firm;  
No longer squirming like a worm,  
He made his quaking disappear.  
- "Give thy master this response:  
What God instals must God retract!  
Till God decides a counter act  
Shall this, my throne, my rump ensconce.  
It would barely fit Will's great behind,  
This throne, so swine-blown does it swell,  
Just like his face. How dost thou tell  
If he farts at thee or speaks his mind?  
Go hence from here thou silly count,  
Go hence and count thy lucky stars  
That in my gaol, of iron bars,  
Thou dost not count a large amount!  
Bid Willy stay within his fiefdom  
With what he holds be satisfied;  
To threaten us with regicide  
Shows a lack of Norman wisdom."  
And then to hoots of great derision  
The count turned smartly on his heel  
And shouted - "Harold thou shalt feel  
The mischief of thy rash decision" -  
- "How durst thou thee and thou a king!  
Thou naughty count, take this thy lord,"  
Said Harold, scooping from a board,  
A dog-turd in his face to fling.  
The count replied - "I prophesy  
As you survey our massing force,

Of cavalry, each skirted horse,  
By Norman archers shalt thou die.”  
His words resembled tumbling bolts  
Which in the breathless air did twirl...  
They pinned each scoffing, laughing earl  
And turned them all to silent dolts,  
Who watched the count in trepidation  
Turn and leave King Harold’s palace,  
Where hung an air of lurking malice,  
Dark wraith of William’s reputation.  
Then Harold broke the yoke of fear  
In which all standing there were caught,  
Had wines and roasted viands brought  
To fill all churning guts with cheer.  
And when the revelry had ended,  
Midst greasy bones of swans and geese,  
Harold’s toastman called for peace  
As their monarch from his seat ascended  
And said – “Even now my men patrol  
The coast of Sussex, coast of Kent,  
Their beaches in their full extent,  
To watch which might be William’s goal.  
As soon as they decry a sail,  
High on any horizon, square,  
This news shall bonfires soon declare.  
Our gathering army shall not fail  
To make a banquet he might like,  
To tempt the gizzard of the duke,  
So sharp he shall his innards puke  
On fare of arrow, sword and pike!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Those Vikings in the far north-east  
Did coastal villages attack  
And found a monastery to sack,  
Did on its swine and oxen feast,  
Drank gallons of the abbot’s ales  
Which dutifully the monks had brewed,  
So issued forth in manner lewd  
Of wind and laughter hearty gales.  
The awful news came riding south  
That Vikings swigged with great abandon,  
Would soon be swaggering to London.  
That wiped the smile from Harold’s mouth.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the farther shore Duke William waited  
To hear what news his man might bring  
Of Harold, fool, pretentious king,  
Which then the count, returned, related;  
Though William stood in heavy mail  
And armour, helmet weighed a ton  
He leapt madly up and down upon  
A crab and cried – “Allons! Set sail!”  
And all the archers, soldiers, knights  
With bows and arrows, bludgeons, lances  
And horses doing pretty prances,  
On Angleterre set steady sights.  
And cheering, singing, full of pride,  
On soft breezes, sweet as maidens’ breath,  
To glory sailed - or vicious death -  
Upon that most propitious tide.

\* \* \* \* \*

Should Harold now divide his force?  
No! Yet what a choice he had to make  
On which his kingdom was at stake;  
To fight the Normans first or Norse?  
Poor Harold knew he had to choose  
A course, and took a silver coin  
To tell which battle first to join;  
Said – “Tails they win, and heads I lose!”  
But no-one smiled or liked the joke  
So Harold span the coin once more;  
Where it had landed on the floor  
No-one looked; and no-one spoke.  
- “Let Viking heads roll in the Humber!  
Let Norman tails flee Sussex sand!”  
And a soldier, looking, at his command,  
Said – “Viking heads shall we encumber!”

And like a rock unstoppable  
Careering down a snowy bank  
King Harold’s horde filled flank to flank  
And hurtled north to stem the trouble  
Sown by Harada, Viking chief,  
Joined by Tostig, Harold’s sibling.....  
On Stamford Bridge, blood dribbling,  
Was sealed the fate of their mischief.  
(A massive man had blocked the bridge  
Slicing all who tried to pass,  
Till from below straight up his arse  
A pike was thrust to make him budge.)  
Then falling on the Danes, Norwegians

He made the river run with gore,  
King Harold, till all battle-sore  
His foes submitted to his legions.  
Tostig and Harada fell,  
Were lying bleeding side by side  
And one to t'other, ere they died,  
Said – “Weren't a bad day out. Ah well....”  
“Ha-ha, Harada! Serves thee right”!  
Said Harold – “Ha-ha-ha indeed,  
It is a treat to watch thee bleed  
Thou wert a loathsome silly wight.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Despatching thus the Viking threat,  
King Harold turned his army round  
And southward gobbled up the ground  
To William for their tête-à-tête,  
Who, he had heard, had crossed the sea  
And landed on the Sussex coast  
Together with his warlike host  
At a place called Pevensey.  
Now, having slaughtered one dread foe,  
And full of fire a victory brings,  
And finding William camped at Hastings,  
He was dying to strike another blow.  
Though hot, unslept and battle-sore,  
Though feet were chafed and rubbed to blisters,  
His soldiery and free enlisters  
Were keen to smell the Norman's gore.  
At first the battle-day went well;  
Although in tactics somewhat cruder  
Outnumbering the new intruder  
The Saxons' axing, piking swell  
Squeezed and squashed and finally broke  
The Norman ranks and back they fell  
And running down the hill pêle-mêle  
Were chased by whooping Saxon folk.  
Now, William saw the crown he cherished  
More firmly fitting Harold's head  
And drawing out his sword he said  
- “By tonight I shall 'ave perished  
Unless we turn that Saxon tide!”  
And ordering out his cavalry  
He sent them into rivalry  
With those pursuers and soon espied  
That Saxon soldiers, separated,  
Hither, thither, in their chase,  
To swords more vulnerable in space,  
Were dropping, slain, eviscerated.

Their lack of sense and discipline  
Just as a victory was near  
Would make the triumph disappear  
Would let the Norman conqueror win.  
And Harold saw with trepidation  
The Normans gain the upper hand;  
He turned and gazed around his land  
And feared the losing of his nation...  
And a final, frenzied battle-cry  
Froze upon his pallid lips  
As one of many arrow-tips  
Tumbled, plunging in his eye.

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The day belonged to Will the Bastard  
And coast and land, the very air;  
And towns in trembling, dread despair  
Knew his dire revenge, the dastard.

Had Harold gone by alphabet  
Had conquered, fresh, the Normans first  
And then the Norsemen's dreams had burst,  
Had clung our tongue Germanic yet.

### **SODOM AND GOMORRAH**

God doomed Sodom and Gomorrah.  
He warned them sternly – NOW, STOP SINNING!  
- "God, we will...we will...tomorrow...."  
YOU SHALL OBEY, OBEY!  
- "Norra chance!"  
- "Sinning's nice...Come on God...chill!  
- "You know you would not cause us sorrow."  
OH YES, OH YES, OH YES I WILL!  
REPENT, REPENT YOUR WILFUL HORROR!  
And He cracked the ground beneath their feet,  
And blew upon the placid sea,  
Till breakers rolled in every street  
And brought to each calamity.  
And drunken, naked citizens  
Were running out of clubs and inns -  
Still clutching dice from gambling dens -  
And fleeing multitudes of sins.  
One lifted sweaty hands in prayer  
Protesting  
- "God it wasn't me  
It wasn't me, I would not dare  
To disobey you wilfully."  
BUT I WATCHED YOU SINNING, YES I DID

- "No, it must have been my double!  
Of him not me You should be rid.  
Don't bury me in muck and rubble!"  
FROM DUST AND ROCK I SET THEE FREE  
BREATHED LIFE IN THEE - WHAT DIDST THOU DO?  
CHOSE WICKEDNESS AND TURPITUDE...  
ONE COVERED UP A RABBI'S LOO  
WITH CELLOPHANE! AN ACT PROFANE!  
And a lad stood up in tears and said  
- "It were me God, but I shan't again."  
I KNOW - FOR SOON THOU SHALT BE DEAD  
And all the mightiest buildings shook  
And statues crumbled, pillars fell  
And sinners lavas undertook  
And ferried them direct to Hell.  
The Gomorrah'ns blamed the Sodomites  
For setting such a bad example,  
Desecrating sacred sites  
Eating dinners more than ample  
Getting fat and hugging sofas.  
To this the latter took exception  
- "Them Gomorons are the idlest loafers  
Compared to them we are perfection...."  
SILENCE roared the Lord I'M SICK  
OF HEARING ALL YOUR LOATHSOME BLEATING  
At which a Negotiator slick  
Asked Yahweh to a summit meeting.  
SPEAK FROM THERE, FROM WHERE YOU STAND  
I HEAR THEE WELL ENOUGH FROM HERE.  
BUT TRICKERY AND SLEIGHT OF HAND  
WILL NOT BAMBOOZLE ME, NO FEAR!  
- "Look. I'll bring each side together  
And try to narrow down the gap....  
You, God, now have lost your tether  
And want two cities off the map.  
They, God, desire a bit of fun....  
So, let's ban sinning in the week  
Then when the weekend has begun  
Weak mortals may some pleasure seek!"  
THOU DREADFUL MAN! And a lightning flash  
Sizzled him, for he had sinned  
And turned him into sorry ash  
Dispersèd by the streaming wind.  
Then stepped up a Politician  
Who saw his chance to save the day.  
- "Why not make a ...bold decision  
To make ..er...some sins...go away...  
Lord...we'll have a great....debate  
In parliament and pass ....new laws,  
Abolish some sins, out...of date



And ..." (to gathering applause)  
"Let coveting one's neighbour's ass  
To Sodom's environs apply  
(They do that sort of thing en masse)  
Now, all in favour just shout aye.. (Aye!)  
New Religion for a brand New Age!  
New clauses, brand New Constitution  
So God... Y-You'd just be..... all the rage  
Please don't dismiss...this bold solution."  
Ere he could raise his arms aloft  
In triumph, both his arms had withered  
And all his flesh and bones turned soft  
And down a smoking crack he slithered.  
HOW DARE HE TRY TO WIN MY VOTE  
HOW DARE HE TRY HIS SMARM AND CHARM  
WHAT A WEASEL, WHAT A STOAT  
HEY SATAN!

"What?"

DO HIM SOME HARM!

- "Right-o, but I can hardly cope,  
Could you do Sodom *then* Gomorrah?  
We're out of pitchforks, flails and rope  
Have you some Angels I could borrow?"  
SILENCE SATAN! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE  
TO THRIVE BEHIND MY PEARLY GATES  
IN PRIDE YOU TOOK A FOOLISH STANCE...  
- "Well, I like it here with all me mates."  
God grabbed some handy mountain tops  
And ground them into smithereens  
And houses, cafés, schools and shops  
Were buried midst chaotic scenes.  
At once a mighty gale went roaring  
And ripping folk like fruit from trees,  
Where they had climbed from water pouring,  
All swirling round their knocking knees.  
Far and wide a baleful wailing  
Filled spaces dark and sulphurous  
Till a Poet cried  
- 'Twas Virtue's failing!  
As all was much too dull for us!  
Who wanted tea when there was beer?  
And bony fish when there was steak?  
If wholesome things had given cheer  
There would have been no cause to break  
Your laws and hence no great temptation....  
So why should we be held to blame,  
We Gomorrah'ns and that ...Sodding nation!"  
And as he spake an orange flame  
Consumed him, doomed him, fuming Bard....  
Now who was left who might persuade

God to calm, come down less hard  
On quaking folk so sore afraid?  
All who survived this spot of bother  
Were panicking that they'd be next  
Except one bold Philosopher.  
He was, to put it mildly, vexed.  
- "God, You just calm down a tad  
And think things over logically;  
Are people really quite so bad,  
To treat them so abysmally?  
If we ever have a naughty dream  
Or naughty thoughts pop in our mind  
Like bubbles in an errant stream  
Is that the fault of humankind?  
Men with a right to choose, you built  
And when we choose these things to do  
Why should we shoulder all the guilt?  
Who made those dreams and fancies? You!"  
OH THOU DOST THINK THYSELF SO CLEVER  
WITH THY FLATULENT PHILOSOPHY.  
ARE NAUGHTY CHOICES RIGHT? NO NEVER!  
I DAMN THEE FOR ETERNITY!

Thunder clapped in clouds of blood  
And shook foundations, tore up roots,  
And where the learned sage had stood  
Was just a pair of smoking boots.  
Then from a bawdy house a Madam  
Entwined her ruddy arms and spoke.  
- "It strikes me that the sons of Adam  
Take after him, a lusty bloke;  
Eve's lovely charms he can't resist..  
You made them irresistible..."  
AND I TOLD THEM THAT THEY MUST DESIST  
FROM PRACTICES DETESTABLE  
IN GOMORRAH BUT MAINLY THERE IN SODOM  
WHERE MEN WITH MEN IN SIN DO LIE  
I DID NOT DESIGN THERETO A BOTTOM  
MY NATURAL LAW DO THEY DEFY  
AND AS FOR THEE, FOUL PROSTITUTE  
THOU HARLOT, HARPY, STALE, BAD BAWD  
I HEREBY MAKE THEE DESTITUTE  
THOU AND THINE SHALL ALL BE GORED  
BY SATAN'S HORNS

- "Hang on a bit!

We're knackered here, we need a break."  
SILENCE SATAN! GET ON WITH IT!  
- "We need more men, for heaven's sake!"  
A Hero stood

- "I shall be brave  
Upon this head I take all blame

That these two cities I might save..."  
THAT'S VERY GENEROUS, TAKE HIS NAME  
VERY GOOD AND KIND OF HIM  
A BRIGHT IDEA, I'LL MAKE A NOTE.....  
BUT TO ALL THE POISONS IN THIS LIMB  
ONE LIFE IS NOT THE ANTIDOTE  
And then a Priest stood on a box...  
This theologian calmly said  
- "Why hurl at us these waves and rocks  
When all This issues from Your Head?  
Why tax us all for Adam's sin?  
You were his Father as he was mine.  
So with Yourself You should begin.  
The fault in us is Yours, Divine!"  
And for a moment God fell silent...  
In skies there glimmered pale the sun  
And all the winds and hailstones violent  
As swiftly stalled as they'd begun.  
And cautiously survivors stirred.....  
The Priest was lifted shoulder-high  
In every street rejoicing heard  
That angry God had left the sky!  
But then, by mighty whirlwinds spun,  
The whirling drapes of clouds drew back.  
A mighty Hand plucked up the sun,  
A peach, and all the sky turned black.  
Until the gleam of every star  
That glowed within the firmament  
And wheeling planets, near and far,  
Showed His Estate in its extent.

IN ME THROUGH ME FROM ME BY ME  
IS NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD  
MY PURPOSE IS MY MYSTERY  
I FASHIONED NOT INIQUITIES  
NO FLOWER NO TREE NO BEAST DOES ILL  
FOR THEY HAVE NOT THE POWER OF CHOICE  
TO THE MATTER OF MY SECRET WILL  
THEY GIVE FORM AND HUE AND MOVEMENT VOICE  
TO BREED TO FEED THIS KILLS THIS OTHER  
IN THE NATURAL PATTERN OF MY PLAN.....  
THAT CAIN DECIDES TO KILL HIS BROTHER  
IS THE EVIL STRATAGEM OF MAN  
WHEN MAN TO MAN IS HARSH AND CRUEL  
OR THE VESSEL OF HIS SOUL NEGLECTS  
AND LIVES BEYOND THE GOLDEN RULE  
OF EARTH AND NATURE DISRESPECTS  
AND SPOILS THE GIFTS FOR HIM I SPAN  
MISUSES THEM FOR DEVILMENT  
NO WONDER THAT I PUNISH MAN

**THERE IS.**

WHEN HE FROM SIN WILL NOT RELENT

I GAVE HIM GREAT INTELLIGENCE  
THE GREATEST GIFT I COULD BESTOW  
HIS SIN IS DISOBEDIENCE  
FOR THIS I CHIDE AND BRING HIM LOW  
SATAN TOO HAD POWER TO CHOOSE  
AGAINST MY RULE DID HE REBEL  
AND OTHERS DID THEIR CHOICE MISUSE  
AND FOLLOWED SATAN STRAIGHT TO HELL  
I AM THE FATHER MAN THE CHILD  
WHEN HE OBEYS I KISS HIS BROW  
WHEN HE REVOLTS IS HE REVILED  
AND CHASTISED AS I CHASTISE HIM NOW  
The Priest then turned and found a girl  
A sobbing orphaned wanderer  
- "Take then this Innocent to hurl  
To the Fires with every squanderer  
Of Your fabled generosity."  
TOO MUCH, TOO MUCH DOST THOU PRESUME  
And in thunderous ferocity  
The Priest, enlightened, met his doom.

Now there was scarce a house intact  
In Gomorrah and none at all in Sodom.  
God counted all the sinners stacked  
In cells of Hell and said THERE - I'VE GOT 'EM!.  
ALRIGHT, YOU BETTER ONES, COME OUT  
From boughs, from bushes out they poured.  
And from then on they would, no doubt  
Behave themselves and praise the Lord.

### **THE RETURN OF SATAN**

When Satan had lived a million years  
In Hell, and he was very bored,  
He wrote a message to the Lord:  
- "Lord, I'm bored, I'm bored to tears,  
I'm out of ways to punish men,  
To chastise them for being bad;  
Forgive, forget and I'd be glad  
And I'd go straight and start again...  
Take Adolf Hitler (I wish you would)...  
Taking tweezers to his moustache,  
I can't do it with my old panache.....  
A change of scene would do me good;  
Making veggies eat bad meat  
And making idle loafers jog,  
And pussy-lovers walk the dog  
And kings and queens lick paupers' feet,

Making pop fans hark to Mozart  
And classic fans hear David Essex,  
Turn the blasé into nervous wrecks...  
God, I've lost the art and heart...  
And if I fall asleep I dream  
Of screeching folk in fiery cells  
And brimstone, rotten-eggy smells  
- If I pull another tooth, I'll scream...  
I've made monoglots learn French and Spanish  
Till they are literate and fluent,  
Tied to school desks many a truant,  
Cooked gluttons pies which sudden vanish...  
Made football hooligans watch ballets  
And Guardian readers read the SUN  
Made skinny models weigh a ton  
And slavers sit in slimy galleys....  
Made speeding drivers drive old coaches  
For ever round and round Hell's tracks,  
Made the fashionable wear pack-a- macks  
And thrown to gourmets bony roaches...  
There's nothing in my catalogue,  
There's nothing new or cruel to try  
On nose or ear or tongue or eye  
With ferret, raven, bat or dog;  
I've exhausted all my keenest fires,  
Hammered in too many nails  
And tied too many knots in flails,  
Chastising all the world's pariahs.  
So God, I beg another chance..  
I know that I'm a handsome devil  
But I'd play my harp and never revel....  
Your Angel band would I enhance!"  
He stuffed all in an envelope  
And shook awake his waiting imp  
- "Take this to God in Heaven, gimp"  
- "But I don't know the way!"  
- "You'll cope."

The scarlet goblin rose on fumes,  
Flying, soaring higher, higher  
Till just as small was every fire  
Below, as stars in purple glooms.  
In dark, he felt a stony roof  
The ceiling of the hellish pit,  
Sharp with flints set into it,  
Polished like a cloven hoof.  
And as he searched, a shaft of light  
Came thrusting from a golden patch,  
A square, the very hole, the hatch  
Where sinners plunged to meet their plight;

And as he stared, bank men in suits  
Hurtled, screaming, through the hole  
And filleted of perished soul  
Became Satan's latest raw recruits.  
The goblin saw his vital chance  
Before the swinging hatch was shut,  
And on the edge his talons put  
And clambered up to looks askance  
Of Angels hushing frenzied squeals  
Of sorry sinners in the queue  
Who promised now what good they'd do  
If someone heard their last appeals.  
The hellion saw a canyon filled  
With mortals in a mass lament,  
Ten miles at least was its extent  
Of newly dead - or newly killed...  
An Angel shouted - "Crimson beast  
What art thou? What might be thy charge?  
Why art thou, churlish imp, at large?  
By whom wert thou from Hell released?"  
Quoth the imp - "I have a brief  
From my great master to thine own,  
A message which I, this imp, alone  
Is meant to carry to thy Chief!"  
- "From the Fallen One?" St Michael cried  
Attentive to these squeaking tones,  
Higher than those baleful groans  
Of shaking sinners who had died.  
- "The very same - the Lord Lucifer,  
Who sweeps this chaff from Heaven's querns,  
Who all thy Master's mischief burns."  
- "What calumny do I infer  
From such a gross, outrageous speech?"  
And he tried to grab the goblin's wings,  
But fleetest of infernal things,  
This goblin scurried out of reach.  
- "Odious imp! Impious hellion!  
How durst thou such a lie imply!  
Thy master did my Lord defy,  
Made Adam fall, inspired rebellion;  
This wailing queue, this baleful World  
Which should have been a Paradise,  
Free of Toil and Death and Vice,  
This Hell in which the Bad are hurled  
Are all thy master devil's fault!  
And all the torment here thou spiest  
With thy green eye, which me, the Highest  
Here defies, revolves around his vile revolt!"

The goblin grimaced, grinned and cackled,

The Angels rose to full extent,  
In hot pursuit of him they went.  
He swifter though, could not be shackled  
And fled between the scuttling feet;  
And with the ruddy rocks he blended,  
The canyon walls he soon ascended  
And at its rim a swain did meet.  
Now, he had never seen a swain  
Alive and eating bread and cheese,  
And quaffing ale in peaceful ease  
Upon a pleasant, verdant plain.  
- "O man," he whispered, behind a rock.  
"I need to make my way to God;  
Look not, for thou wouldst find me odd,  
My countenance would cause thee shock."  
The swain turned round but could not see  
The mouth which these strange words did say.  
- "Whoe'er thou art - to find thy way  
Be kind and artless, just like me..."  
The swain was old and almost blind,  
The imp could tell his time was nigh.  
And as he looked the swain did die,  
Whereupon there came of Angelkind  
One fair, who stroked that grizzled brow  
Until his soul beside him stood;  
- "Old swain, fear not for thou wert good!  
I shall take thee up to heaven now.  
For at its gates Saint Peter counts  
The sins that men did not repent;  
Thence shall thy simple soul be sent  
To Purgatory for such amounts  
Of time as Peter deems required  
To purge thee, swain, until thy soul  
Be cleansed and purified and whole  
And all thy petty sins trans-fired.  
- "Sounds fair enough to me, let's go."  
And off they flew; the imp arose  
And went behind them just as close  
As he dared to, in their undertow.  
The Angel had been upon this mission,  
Before the great alarm rang out,  
That some fiendish creature crept about,  
And did not suspect this imposition.  
Through the clouds the threesome flew  
Till stars were twinkling in the east,  
Reaching layers where bird nor beast  
Did air or worlds beyond construe.

On a cloud of rose, a colour rare,  
Tinged by gold and silver bright

Then gently did the pair alight,  
Of their pursuer unaware.  
Through the mists they slowly trod  
Till in the distance, tall and wide,  
And white, reflecting Heaven's pride,  
They spied the holy gates of God.  
And as they reached the stately portal  
The swain began to feel afraid,  
For He cast his angel in the shade  
Archangel Peter, Great Immortal.  
Then he bent down, with kindly smile.  
Through a beard of gold he quietly spoke -  
Lest his great voice did fear invoke -  
And bade him take a seat a while  
That he could make inventory  
Of all his small and great transgressions,  
Both hidden ones and free confessions,  
To be burned away in Purgatory....  
The swain was falling off to sleep  
When Peter slammed his massive book  
So hard the pearly portals shook.  
- "WHAT didst thou to that wee sheep?"  
There was uproar at the gate until  
The shepherd, cowed, avowed his crime  
(Which gave the scheming demon time  
To squeeze feet and feelers through the grille.)  
And he was off before the sentinel  
Had time to even move his spear,  
And used his guile to disappear,  
Learnt from time misspent in Hell.  
Then all around a hue and cry  
Went up, and guards ran everywhere,  
The clever little beast to snare,  
And hurl him hell-bent down the sky.

The clamour reached God's very throne;  
For intelligence of this He sent,  
But told, He was omniscient,  
He said - "Of course, We should have known..  
But We forget...Our memory,  
So keen so many years ago,  
Now sometimes works a little slow.  
There's such a lot to know, you see...  
Where every particle at every time  
Is going, what doing, has gone and done,  
In every atom, microbe, sun  
Requires an Intellect sublime...  
Yes...Bring that upstart hellion here,  
We shall see what Satan has in mind  
(But We should know...Oh, are We blind?)



Our thought at present is not clear....”

And angel courtiers looked concerned,  
And worried glances were exchanged  
And secret meetings were arranged  
To air anxieties returned.....

- “Where shall they seek this hellion out?”

A courtier shrewd and cunning said,  
“The place, You know, is in Your Head  
Divulge it, we shall find the lout..”

- “He hides...within a tree...a tree...

- “Which? The oak, the beech, the fig?

It has many...branches...is very...big  
It’s...”

....”The banyan?”

..”PEACE... Shall We ban thee?”

And all fell silent and sought the floor  
With eyes embarrassed for their Lord,  
Afraid that it might get abroad  
That He could scarce remember more...

- “Wait now.....tell Our troops to forage  
Amongst the groves near Peter’s gate.

We now indubitably state

The monkey’s in the tree.....of knowledge!”

First, silence swift befell the conclave.

Did someone smile, or even snigger,  
As each such irony did figure?

Then, God the reckless order gave

To bring the imp to Him.....direct!

(Why? What could Satan ever state

Might make his stain evaporate?

All pleas and ploys should He reject!

And did the Almighty wish to view

A mere imp, a lowly imp

Who in respect for Him would skimp?

More dignity from God was due!!)

In the woods the soldiers creeping

The tree of Adam’s doom decried,

And in its canopy one angel spied

Amongst the boughs the blighter sleeping;

And reaching up a shining trident

Through the branches to his nook,

The angel skilfully did hook

And brought to ground the demon strident.

- “Vassals! Slaves! What servile toads!

When did you make your own decisions?

Divided up in mute divisions,

Without a say! Ah, now explodes

My derision, all my vile contempt,

My venom for your lily livers,

Bowing deep to order-givers,  
From independent thought exempt!  
Here the merest imp you see  
But I excelled in Satan's throng.  
Handsome, tall, courageous. strong  
In these traits more than thee ..or thee..  
I wore my uniform with pride...  
Better to fight in a rebel cause  
Than to sit and clap polite applause.  
Such falsity should I abide?"  
- "Silence, imp! For thou art netted,"  
Shouted Michael, just arrived  
"I know not how this imp contrived  
To enter heaven....Wert thou abetted?"  
- "What? Dost thou, Saint Michael, scent a treason?"  
- "Do not "thou" me, thou imp abject!"  
- "Aha! Suspicion I detect!  
What stinks, stinks bad, with rancid reason!"  
- "SILENCE! SHUT THY GOB HOBGOBLIN!  
Tie his chicken's legs together  
And round his neck this barbèd tether."  
- "How shall I walk then?"  
- "Hobbling! Wobbling!!"

And from the groves he was escorted  
Through white arcades, down golden paths,  
Up steps where granite epitaphs  
Recorded Satan's plot aborted,  
By pillars blue and creamy marbled,  
Down terraces all swathed in silk  
Where cherubs bathed in asses' milk,  
Where echoed cries and laughter garbled  
At this red churl with winglets clipped,  
Who, tethered, hobbled, limped and swayed,  
Stared back at starers unafraid  
And kept some dignity, tight-lipped.  
Until great cedar portals, slowly,  
Slowly showed a silver crack  
Which turned to gold as each swept back,  
Admitting Highest, high - and lowly  
To the glory of His mighty dais,  
Where God sat in a blinding glow  
By praising angels, row on row  
Brandishing a fiery mace.  
And when His hand He slowly raised  
The tumult of the scene did cease.  
And in this perfect calm and peace  
Upon the scarlet imp He gazed.  
- "Be this the rebel's emissary,  
The messenger of Lucifer?  
Forthwith with thee shall We confer,

And hear his latest heresy.”  
And by the trident-prodder pushed,  
Like a crayfish on a giant’s fork,  
The hellion began to talk  
Amongst the great assembly hushed.  
- “My master, Satan, hied me hither  
To You great Sire of all Creation,  
Under a weighty obligation  
A precious parchment to deliver.  
My own escape did I contrive  
From my jail in perpetuity  
And used my ingenuity  
To this heaven from my hell to strive” -  
(And here the hellion turned and leered) -  
“Past every angel, high and low,  
Fleet of foot and wing did go,  
And fleet of mind by stars I steered!”  
Then from his pouch there was produced  
The letter by King Demon writ;  
That God Almighty would peruse it.....  
That His Mighty mind might be seduced?  
This note was taken up to God  
Who read it slow with rising mirth  
Until was shaking all His girth  
-“Satan will straighten! Cunning Sod!  
And yet, leave Us all, We shall reflect  
Upon the several consequences,  
Of these sly and wily cadences  
And see what purpose We detect  
Between these lines nefarious...”  
And all withdrew, the doors were slammed  
Upon the holy - and the damned -  
With hopes and notions various.

Now God had harboured hopes for aeons  
His broken realm could all be healed  
And Hell be cleansed of sin and sealed,  
That Eden’s ruined environs  
To former glories be restored,  
By pure pairs there be populated  
Whose race, when they had copulated,  
Would love, obey and praise the Lord.  
If Satan, straitened, could return,  
In Heaven take his rightful place,  
Then why in any part of Space  
Should fires of retribution burn?  
If Satan, greatest reprobate,  
Could bow his head and say Amen,  
Then why not silly, sinful men  
Or women - and each apostate?

He knew the Beast would one day tire  
Of stoking up the fires of Hell  
On heaven's fields would yearn to dwell  
To seek forgiveness would aspire.  
Yet, here ended God's omniscience  
No consequences could be gleaned  
Of a transformation of the fiend;  
Of such He had no prescience.  
He read again, again, again...  
And looked for sentiments insincere.  
Then bade his ministers reappear  
And shared with them of thoughts, His train.  
The letter He had copied fast  
By scribes, by servants passed around.  
All read in silence. Not a sound  
Till all had read the offer last.  
The shrewd advisor - Kennet by name  
Stole a surreptitious glance  
At Michael who then, quite by chance,  
At Kennet, did the very same.  
Kennet smiled, another sneered,  
One tittered, another, then another  
Till every angel, clung to brother,  
And in laughter Satan's offers jeered.  
Till one by one this company  
Looked up and sensed the Lord's grave face  
And sobriety regained the place  
Slowly of their gaiety.  
- "We meant," then calmly said the Lord,  
"To hear your wisest, cool advice.  
Is this, your braying laughter, wise?  
Now should this letter be ignored?"  
Then forward Holy Peter stepped  
- "Lord, I count no end to sinning.  
I say we strike a new beginning.  
Let Hell and Earth be newly swept,  
Let all the stinking cells of sin  
Be opened up and clinkers blown,  
Got rid of every singèd bone,  
Put out the fires, let sunlight in!  
Sow of Hope, sweet, fragrant seeds  
Which on sooty compost of the old  
With carpets of new flowers unrolled  
Shall cover over foul misdeeds.  
Let Lucifer honestly repent  
Before this Holy Congregation  
All souls, the Good of God's great nation."  
St Michael bellowed - "I dissent!"  
As he pushed through, all turned and watched  
Till his foot on lowest step was placed

And pointing there said – “Here erased,  
Here was foul rebellion scotched,  
Here to God the very threat,  
The consequence of Satan’s vice  
Put down with awesome sacrifice...  
Here, are aeons later met -  
The very ones who fought the fight -  
Here to speak of pacts of peace  
With our Foe? Can we ever cease  
To combat Dark with golden Light?  
The war on Evil is never won  
Thereto our preachers ever go.  
Better distrust the Devil we know  
Not trust this one! There, I’m done.”  
Cheers and jeers rang out for both;  
Sly Kennet saw his golden chance  
And took an equi-distant stance  
Sought compromise and thence the growth  
Of his insidious influence.  
He swiftly held his hand aloft  
And with a voice persuasive, soft  
He spoke with growing confidence;  
- “Mighty God, Good Company,  
Two Greats of Heaven have we now heard.  
Whose reasoning shall be preferred?  
With both Archangels I agree...  
In disagree in equal measure...”  
He paused as many a nodding head  
Confirmed the truth of what he said  
- “So let us seek a precious treasure,  
Smooth elixir of water and oil  
- The hopes of Peter, the fears of Michael -  
That we may break the vicious cycle  
Of sin and torture, death and toil,  
That Earth might be a Paradise  
And Hell a flower-strewn museum,  
A cemetery, a mausoleum  
Where lie old purgatives of Vice.  
Old spirits here on Heaven’s books  
May stay amongst us if they choose,  
Or come and go, for none would lose  
If Glory shines in all the nooks  
In every place which God has made,  
On mountain, beach, on verdant meadow,  
Where tides and streams and rivers flow,  
In every wood and every glade!  
Lucifer has sworn an oath  
*(And here he held aloft his page)*  
- Let us begin a Second Age  
And hold him to his written troth

But...*(to swelling discontent)*  
For Lucifer to gain admission  
He must agree to precondition  
To show that what he wrote, he meant.  
His followers should be hostages  
Held prisoner on some planet hard  
- Angel throngs could be their guard -  
And should he sin, no vestiges  
Of them, his men, should be preserved.  
Let Lucifer, once here, be shackled,  
His horny hands be manacled  
And let his freeing be deserved!  
When that blue jewel of Your Creation  
Around Your golden light, the sun,  
Ten thousand times her course has run,  
Should be the term of his probation.”  
And when he sat a sullen silence  
Was broken by some single cheers  
Till there was ringing in his ears  
Many shouts of acquiescence,  
Till God spake out and all paid heed;  
- “It breaks Our Heart that rife do teem  
Such imperfections in Our Scheme.  
If We could root out every weed  
Which chokes the lovely blooms We wrought,  
The thistles in the thoughts of men,  
Banish sin, begin again  
What should a minor risk purport?  
If that motley band of Satan’s allies  
Were banished furthestmost from here  
What insurrection should we fear?  
For here wells none, we must surmise...  
Archangel Michael! Our Bravest Hero!  
We understand your fulmination  
You it was in culmination  
Of our affray disarmed the Foe;  
Who should more than you protest  
Lord Lucifer restored to see?  
To keep him under lock and key  
Of all Peers you would be the best.  
Your guard shall now be fifty more,  
The strongest, cleverest in Heaven  
And in thy charge shall he be shriven  
This disobedient Lucifer!  
We have spoken, congregation,  
Let no-one doubt Our made-up mind  
Announce Our Will to every kind  
That shall be whole Our great Creation!  
Michael! Take your band straightway  
And quench the steaming hobs of Hell.

Thyself in person go and tell  
That Demon what he must obey.  
Set out the terms of his release  
And take his soldiers into exile,  
Curtail the fate of sinners vile;  
Make every further torment cease.”

All praising God, then all withdrew  
And Michael gathered all around  
His comrades old, and newly found,  
And down to them this challenge threw:  
- “Soldiery! A great task ours!  
Forthwith are we to fly to Hell  
And Satan’s brash rebellion quell  
And fetter his infernal powers;  
All souls that in his fires he fries  
All precincts, pools and tools of pain  
All offices of his domain,  
Atrocities he did devise,  
Shall we inter in alabaster  
And seed fresh soil with meadowsweet  
Let in God’s light, God’s gentle heat  
And bring that demon to our Master!

Swift through Heaven the news had spread  
And crowds of souls had soon assembled  
And with their cheers the palace trembled  
As Michael on his mission sped.  
Through open gates he led his host  
And soon in clouds, a storm he tamed  
And loud to quaking men proclaimed  
To nether and to uppermost  
- “Riddling Man, wrapped up in thine,  
Too blinded by thy daily need  
Too minded on thyself, thy greed  
For trifles, hear a Truth Divine!  
Love the Earth and love thy brother  
Praise the Lord for all thou hast  
Share His fruits, His Bounty vast  
And care and comfort one another.  
I am come to say a solemn end  
To sin and suffering there below  
To stop thy wretched overflow  
To lakes of Hell where all men tend.  
Trespassers now shall all be banished  
Unto the orb which rises there  
Yon silver queen with craters bare.”  
And, with a thunderclap, he vanished.  
Many fell and just as many ran  
And many stood and stared amazed

Save one - a tax-evader - unfazed  
Laughed and said – “Behold what Man  
Can do with his technology!  
What holograms he can invent,  
And-”

- “This mocking man will not repent!  
Now ever shall he banished be!”  
When all looked round, all wondered where  
That man had gone, for in his place  
Was nothing, not one single trace,  
Just shoes of ass skin, smoking pair.  
- “There! Regard the shivering moon!”  
And each did crane a fearful neck  
Until they saw a tiny speck,  
Extinguished like a sea-maroon.  
- “In exile shall he ever stand  
And stare upon the wondrous Earth,  
The emerald womb of Adam’s birth,  
Her sapphire waves which wash the land.”  
And the people broke the granaries  
To share their blessed bread abroad,  
Broke armouries with weapons stored,  
Broke down all their boundaries  
Discarded all abominations,  
All tokens of their magpie thieving,  
And, rejoicing, in the Lord believing,  
Eschewed all false denominations.

Encouraged, on Saint Peter flew  
And more determined, set his brow,  
For Satan would be watching now;  
His wily ways too well he knew.  
What authority must he command,  
What rhetoric must he create,  
The Will of God to clearly state,  
To make the Devil understand  
What commitment God expected,  
What promises he must fulfil  
That ten millennia would pass until  
His change of heart would be accepted.  
Then in that canyon did he alight  
And to all the waiting, wailing queue  
Cried - “Amnesty I bring for you!  
To purgatory is booked your flight  
There shall you expiate your sins -  
Some for decades, some for centuries -  
Till every spirit radiant, pure is  
Before your eternal life begins!”  
And all the sinners fell to crying  
In great relief, in gratitude



And soon the milling multitude  
On shafts of golden light were flying.  
And taking up his mighty spear,  
With fury great Saint Michael tore  
And threw away the ancient door  
And shouted – “Lucifer, come here!”

And from the smoky, misty mire  
A great black cloud, a spurting plume,  
The smoke from furnaces of doom  
Towards Saint Michael billowed higher,  
And swelling, did his face engulf;  
To him at once there did appear  
With jet-black eyes and twisted sneer  
Satan’s massive head of wolf,  
And appalling, galling breath did breathe.  
But Michael stood and did not flinch  
Did not retreat one single inch,  
Though inwardly his gorge did seethe.  
-“Thy plea is granted,” he muttered low.  
“Now this inferno thou shalt quit  
And there below in place of it  
Tall fragrant flowers will ever grow.  
Now hear the terms of thy parole:  
Within my sovereign custody  
Shackled shall remain thy body.  
Ten thousand years shall be the toll  
Which thou must pay to make amends;  
And while thou dost, upon the moon  
Thy dissipated, dread, platoon  
Shall serve as hostages, thy friends.  
And shouldst thou once again transgress,  
Then thou wouldst ever in a cell  
Linger till the great stars fell,  
And, dwelt within yon Emptiness,  
Would perpetually thy comrades float,  
And scream unheard that they would die  
Rather than be cast awry  
In the dungeon dark of Space remote.  
They would pay eternal forfeit,  
Shouldst thou scorn the Holy Law  
And on Goodness make unholy war,  
Of preening pride show any surfeit...”

His coal eyes gleamed alight with glee  
- “Ten thousand years is slight probation  
Compared to Ever in damnation.  
To all God’s terms shall I agree!”  
And with a wicked razor claw  
He cut his thumb and signed with blood

The bull to prove he understood  
That sin henceforth he would no more.  
Michael blew and dried the cross,  
So that his breath blew in his face,  
To show the Foe his proper place  
And that this freedom meant, its loss.  
His warty hand grabbed Michael's hand,  
But Michael drew his own away,  
Disgusted and was swift to say  
- "Satan, thou shouldst understand  
That I shall ever be thy warder,  
And like yon kestrel ever watch thee  
Of thy shackles twist, in spite, the key;  
Of thy every deed shall be recorder;  
Thou shalt never whisper naughty word,  
Make grimace, sneer behind thy sleeve,  
Each tic of thine shall I perceive.....  
This Hell by thee shall be preferred,  
....At least thou hadst thy privacy  
And there imposed thy wanton will,  
Deployed thy own perverted skill,  
To punish men's impiety."  
Satan smiled. -"Great Michael, listen,  
I intend to prove you wrong  
I too in Heaven still belong  
And shall regain my old position  
And serve with God's great trusty few,  
His Inner Court, and implement  
His policies and complement  
The loyal Gabriel, Peter... You."  
Saint Michael scanned his ruby face  
For any sign of sly dissembling,  
Then bid his angel troops, assembling,  
To lead him shackled from that place.  
And turning then did draw his sword,  
Mightier than a lightening flash,  
And smote Hell's smoking piles to ash  
And buried all the cursèd horde.  
And the devil's every dire dragoon  
Who stood in awe of Michael's deed  
Were put to work and sowed the seed,  
Then marched away to plague the moon.  
And Michael drew his sword once more  
Hell's dome, the canyon floor, he rent  
Till light and rain through every vent  
Upon the underworld did pour.  
He saw thin loops and threads of green  
Throughout the ash begin to spread  
Bathed in light and rain there shed,  
The first that Hell had ever seen.

And satisfied that all was well  
That in this pit God's works abounded,  
That here His new Estate was founded,  
The Saint pronounced an end to Hell.

Then he bounded up and out and found  
His soldiers milling round the Foe,  
Who towered above two angels low  
Who with a clanking, hammering sound,  
Were Satan's ankles fettering;  
And as they watched, in cooling rain  
Regrew the devil's golden mane  
And downy-plumed each leathern wing,  
His lupine snout, in snarling set,  
And goatly horns began to shrink,  
And fade away his sulphur stink  
And turned to blue his eyes of jet.  
His fiery glow began to fade,  
His twisted, arrowed tail did go;  
From cloven hooves of indigo  
A pair of perfect feet was made.  
And all, astonished, must concur  
(And he, by rainy pools not least  
Where he, upon himself, could feast)  
How beautiful was Lucifer.  
And seeing also in all eyes  
Of admiration, gleaming proof,  
His ancient gaze of one aloof  
Itself began to realise  
In glancing, dancing eyes superb  
And gracious, warm, embracing smile  
Bestowed with such a winning style.  
And this did Michael much disturb.  
-“LUCIFER!” - And all were shocked,  
Looked up to see their master stride  
And almost with their charge collide,  
Till both in searching stares were locked.  
Lucifer beamed with eyes of sapphire  
Outsparkling Michael's eyes of grey,  
Which, earnest, would not look away  
And returned that gaze of glittering fire.  
Till slowly Lucifer looked up  
Did close his jewel eyes and say,  
Sighing - “Ah, such a precious day!  
Now runneth over Heaven's cup  
Which with this rain doth me baptise!  
I am to what I was restored!  
I am thankful to the bounteous Lord!  
I raise in praise my grateful eyes!  
I” -

- "Lucifer!"  
- And he looked down  
Unsmiling now, at Michael square;  
One stared with unremitting stare;  
One frowned with unremitting frown.  
- "Lucifer, you gave your word....  
Have sworn that you would cast aside  
All sinful vanity and pride..."  
- "Aye, Michael, it would be absurd  
To leave that lair where I was cast,  
Escape again to light and air  
To rain and hues of sunset fair,  
To shimmering stars in night-pools vast,  
To put this - and - Ah! Heaven all at risk -  
No! My euphoria you misconstrue  
To see my beauty born anew  
In Heaven's showers, fresh and brisk,  
My joy at God's munificence  
Overwhelms me, *not* my beauty."  
- "Do not think you can deceive me  
You admire your own magnificence.  
I read your meanings perfectly,  
Chiming on your silver tongue -"  
- "Lord Michael! No! You do me wrong!  
I am in earnest. Please, please believe me!"  
And Lucifer, lucid, gazed about him.  
- "I see God's Amber in the West  
Flow molten through a cloudy crest  
And seep beyond the canyon rim...  
And a galleon moon, set silver sail  
To catch the fading breeze of light,  
To ride the eastern tides of night  
Amidst the starry breakers pale....  
How many years have passed since I,  
An angel in my first estate,  
Watched in wonder, watched elate  
And saw the charm of such a sky?"  
Then he looked in Michael's eyes direct,  
And lowering his crystal voice  
Said - "Michael, it was not your choice  
My waned star to resurrect.  
You spoke agin me. Who spoke for me?  
Whose rhetoric did Him convince  
To raise again this fallen Prince  
To Cloisters of Eternity?"  
And Michael sought to look beyond  
This seeming curiosity,  
And his eyes, for some monstrosity  
Of purpose in his question, conned.  
Why should Lucifer so wonder

About the dealings in God's Senate,  
Speeches by him, by Peter, by Kennet,  
Which almost rent the House asunder?

Kennet was a star arising

Within the Parliament of Heaven.

(By what ambition was he driven?

What position was he prizing?)

- "Why do you now so hesitate?"

- "Why do you now require to know?"

- "Did Peter speak for me? Yes or no?"

- "Why is this of import great?"

- "Tell me!"

- "No!"

- "So, is curiosity"

A greater wrong, a greater sin

Than that which simmers now within

Your narrow heart, of..... jealousy?"

And in this word the serpent's hiss

Seethed upon his teeth and lips.

He placed his hands upon his hips

And seemed to pout a tiny kiss.

- "Me? Jealous?"

Sod then dared to smile

To see the ire on Michael's brow

- "Who looks the ruddy angel now?"

Yet Michael calmed his boiling bile

And smiled a smile as his reply

- "Take care Satan!"

- "No, Lucifer,

As Lord Lucifer to me refer..."

Then Michael looked him in the eye...

- "Ah, yes, my noble prisoner,

Yet, as your gaoler should I be jealous?

Forgive if I am overzealous

And Prisoner's name on you confer!"

- "Forgive me if I strayed, Great Michael",

Said he with insolent irony

- "I obeyed a questing urge in me,

Which wondered whether it might rankle

That your great advice by God was spurned...

But surely more than two of you

Spoke out? Can no-one present tell me who

It was, who weighty matters turned

In favour mine? Who it was who better plead

Their case than great Saint Michael could,

Who nipped his reasons in their bud

And won the day for me instead?"

One foolish angel - "Kennet!" - shouted,

And Michael smote his head in wrath.

- "Temper! Gaoler! This angel doth

Tell nought but truth, this boy you clouted...  
What? Is honesty a sin...or virtue?"  
- "I remind you....Prisoner.... that I decide  
If you are guilty. Control your pride.  
Your taunting casuistry shall not hurt you,  
But those" - (*now gazing at the moon*)  
- "Who rely upon your wise discretion.  
Shall I teach your insolence a lesson  
And hurl one comrade, yours, past Neptune?"  
At which the devil seized his chance  
To show these troops what loyalty,  
(*So cheaply proved, on bending knee*)  
Great leaders' men should them advance.  
- "Great Lord!" - cried he, with hands a-wringing,  
(With one eye set on the little knots,  
Of angels wiping bloody clots  
From their comrade's nose, and comfort bringing)  
"Spare my soldiers! Shrive their master!  
If I have sinned, then wind these screws  
Tight, as tight as you may choose,  
To my sinews sore, fast and faster.  
Yet before these witnesses I swear...."  
(*And again those angel-knots adressed*)  
"...That I have tried my very best  
From pride and vanity to forebear."  
(*Did one nod?*) Satan, smiling, hung his head  
And stretched his arms aloft to pray,  
Begged loud that none be flung astray  
On his account, of those he led.  
- "I know that I shall hurt to walk,  
That manacled shall be each wrist;  
I am sorry if you take my jist  
All wrong...Shall I, really, hurt to talk??"  
Michael felt that glances sullen  
Were falling on his wingèd shoulders.  
He leapt astride two massive boulders,  
Had Satan gagged and said, crestfallen  
- "I sense now what I had mighty feared  
In this straightforward breast of mine.  
This angel has a wit malign,  
Cunning more rampant than Peter's beard!  
His tongue darts quicker than any snake  
And his it was in Eden's glade  
Which hissed of fruit which God forbade  
And led Adam to his first mistake.  
He ever oozes wit and charm,  
Misuses beauty to thence seduce  
The quite Unwary, Unwise, Obtuse,  
And disarms them ere he does them harm.  
From thee, cadet, whom I did smite

A name I would not breathe, he drew.  
The Why, should not be cause for you.  
To keep it secret was my right,  
For reasons which I shall not share.  
Your oaths to God and me were sworn...  
Now if your loyalties be torn  
Twixt Us and him, you SHALL declare!  
For I will not brook or bear dissent.  
I know this weasel – Oh look, how hurt he seems,  
With eyes uprolled to starry streams! -  
On devious, demonic ways is bent.  
Than me this fiend is cleverer  
The cleverest of all God's host!  
To the wiles must every ear be closed  
Of this calculating prisoner,  
Or he will lead you swift astray.  
This is an order. You WILL ignore him.  
Say nothing to him. Do nothing for him  
Without my say. YOU WILL OBEY.  
Our task is now to stay alert  
Ten thousand years, and keep him tied  
Until is pierced his selfish pride;  
Let nothing our great task pervert!  
If we can see this matter through,  
Until his self-regard has gone  
Then God's great Dream for everyone  
And everything there is, comes true!"

By torchlight now, he made them swear,  
Each one in turn unto his face  
New oaths, and did each one embrace  
And blessed the one whom, unaware,  
The Beast had tricked with clever ploys...  
But Satan sensed he had sown a seed  
Which might spring up, a foul weed,  
In him or fellow hobbledehoys.

The night span on. The moon descended,  
Through fields of dark cleaved down the Plough;  
Till crops of light on yonder brow  
Glowed high, and higher, as night's power ended.  
- "Now make ready!" Saint Michael cried.  
"There, Heaven's gates will soon appear.  
Bring the prisoner amidst these here,  
Behind me steer, to left and right!"  
And rosy-lipped, the Sorceress,  
Sweet Dawn, from eastern pillows rising,  
As flock of swans this host disguising,  
Drew them high to God's recess,  
High Heaven, great cathedral Dome,

Spanning all of Time and Space,  
The Citadel of God's good race,  
Wherein they make eternal home,  
Built by God's creative Might,  
All star-lit in its western realm,  
All sun-lit at its eastern helm,  
Which steers the day to shores of night!  
What throngs of souls, a thousand deep,  
Of heads a seething sea in swell,  
To see the creature brought from Hell,  
A patient watch for him did keep.  
And when the Gates swung back at last  
And, manacled, he hobbled through,  
And for those crowds came into view,  
Of sighs, across this ocean vast,  
Swept breezes in astonishment,  
At Lucifer, his stately stature,  
Sturdy, lithe, leonine creature,  
Of Beauty, superb accomplishment;  
His gag, on beard of golden silk,  
Gave him such a roguish air,  
And, with golden mane and ringlets fair,  
Made swoon some souls of weaker ilk.  
Saint Michael and Saint Peter saw  
With misgiving what effects he wrought;  
The former said – "You little thought,  
When you stood up and argued for  
This monster's rehabilitation,  
His features would regain their glory.  
And now what end shall have our story?  
I tell you now. Annihilation...."  
Before Great Peter could reply,  
Saint Michael moved to Satan's side,  
Yet Peter to his Peer replied  
-"Shall you the will of God defy?"  
This Satan heard...

They walked unto  
The Hall where God in anxious wait  
Sat on his marbled Throne of State,  
And cried – "His manacles undo!  
That he might sign a solemn Pledge  
All rivalry to Us foreswear,  
And ever fond allegiance bear,  
To enjoy celestial privilege.  
But if this solemn Pledge he breaks,  
Within Our Midst he stirs dissent,  
Then all Our Mighty Anger pent,  
Greater than all oceans, seas and lakes,  
Shall wash him into darkest regions  
Of Our Cosmos, Universe colossal,



There to spin and float and jostle  
And sink with his rebellious legions.  
Sign thy name! And never then  
Pretend to more than what thou art,  
Love Us with a steadfast heart  
And never, ever sin again!”  
And Lucifer with eyes in flame  
Took up in craggy hand the plume,  
And looking once around the room  
With great panache wrote down his name.  
And all this while Saint Michael stared,  
A harrier above his prey,  
To see if he might give away  
Some secret confidence he shared,  
Some understanding prearranged,  
With any in his near surround;  
And at the forefront Kennet found,  
With an air of unconcern, estranged  
From any look of Lucifer.  
As Satan’s head moved to and fro  
Acknowledging all those he did know  
Yet never once in Kennet’s quarter  
Did his sly and brilliant eyes alight.  
This, with a shudder, Michael saw  
And, sudden, did his task abhor,  
Whose fair result he now deemed slight.  
Then God bade all around applaud,  
And as they did, with mighty claps,  
He had the gag around those chaps  
Removed at once, and then implored  
Lucifer to give accounts  
Of what had caused his change of heart  
And he, with seeming lack of art  
(*Though, with unseeming, large amounts*)  
The ranks of Heaven thus addressed.  
- “When all the World was bright and new  
And pristine in its every hue,  
When God did every speck invest  
With form and colour, some with life,  
Then all created things rejoiced  
Their very joy at being voiced,  
Then where was rivalry and strife?  
The waters sang on rocks and shingle,  
The winds went whistling and gave the bird  
The sweetest music ever heard  
- Alone excelled when lovers mingle! -  
Though every speck had ample space  
And yet to thrive must each consume  
Some other speck, hence filled with doom,  
Was each example of its race.

In angels, men, and beasts and trees,  
This basic rule of life obtains,  
In seas, in forests, rivers, plains,  
Life thrives on life's insolvencies.  
Is Sin within the weft inwoven,  
The very fabric of the World,  
Essential when our Master hurled,  
His matter bounteous, leavened, proven?  
Yet if God is pure, is matter pure.  
Is Evil born of material conflict,  
Where atoms by gravity inflict  
Themselves on others, and so endure?  
And I within my bloom of youth  
Seethed too with energy and zest  
And with this startling beauty blessed  
Bore out that universal truth,  
That matter will itself assert.  
Yet must be subject to the Mind,  
When forged in holy Angelkind  
And not the Angel Soul pervert.  
In talon, sabre-tooth, and beak,  
Matter blindly serves the drive  
Of animals to stay alive,  
No evil-doing there does wreak.  
I erred. For I could not control  
This mighty urge, on me conferred,  
And in this vessel pride was stirred,  
Which poisoned my immortal soul.  
A million years deprived of light,  
Contoured by vile conceits and vices,  
Which pride in weaker minds entices,  
Disgusted me, the very sight  
Of sinners beset with souls distorted,  
Dissembling and dissident,  
Depraved and disobedient  
Reminded me, as they contorted  
And buckled in their agony,  
With blabber mouths and bulging eyes,  
With lolling tongues and stench of sties,  
What claws of sin had wrought of me.  
Then sure in thought, mature in mind,  
A messenger to God I sent  
To tell my fresh and good intent  
To leave my brutish hell behind.”

Now God in his beneficence  
Beamed down on Lucifer again,  
Till all who watched could not refrain  
From praising God's Magnificence.  
Save Michael, who through teeth clenched tight

Said - "Aye, thy sweet and harping tongue  
Shall charm and soothe with harping song  
And hide thy descant thoughts of spite..."  
- "Saint Michael! Archangel!" God exclaimed,  
We must extend Our gratitude  
That you have brought a devil rude  
And have him for Our host reclaimed!  
Now yonder beacon brighter burns,  
Of the eastern moon. And stars at west,  
With diamond brilliance more are blessed!  
Of Our gifts prodigal, a son returns!  
Let Heaven sing in celebration,  
Let orchestras ring royal tunes  
That all planets, all their spinning moons,  
Shall echo to Our exultation!"  
Then Michael kneeled before the throne  
Said - "Sire! These unforeseen events  
To many minds bring weighty portents.  
We would have a word. Alone."  
And God took up His fiery mace,  
Proclaimed his Inner Circle should  
Remain while all the lesser would  
In thankful joy depart the place.  
Then Michael, heart as full as seas,  
Turned and said with voice in tremble  
- "Forsooth, doth Lucifer dissemble!  
His serpent tongue finds ever ease  
In promises, in eloquence;  
Before we came, like flails of spite,  
His words and eyes with barbs of spite  
Belaboured me in insolence-"  
- "Your antipathy is famed  
For Lucifer, and also his for you...  
The final combat where you two  
Fought shall ever more be framed  
In my mind in sheer ferocity,"  
Said Peter. "We should not be shocked  
That both in enmity are locked..  
And, Michael your impetuosity....."  
And, as if to prove this very truth  
A marble pillar Michael slammed  
And cried - "Antipathy be damned!"  
And shocked all with his speech uncouth.  
And in the silence which ensued  
Michael stared in Kennet's face  
And said - "I sense within this place  
Some foul conspiracy is brewed..."  
- "Conspiracy?" - cried Peter - "You jest!  
And yet your ire shows you in earnest...  
Michael, Michael, whatever ghost discernest

Thou is invisible to me and all the rest!"  
Some laughter made his visage burn;  
From Kennet's leer he thought it came,  
And calling Kennet out by name  
He stared at him with aspect stern.  
Yet Kennet smiled and coolly bowed  
And said – "Lord Michael we admire  
Your honesty, your righteous ire  
Your urge to air your thought aloud,  
Your loyalty, your care, your fear  
That evil may be on the prowl,  
That smiles have hidden aspects foul...  
Yet a seeming may be quite sincere -"  
- "Sincere?" - said Michael – "Sincere, you say?  
Thy tongue should rot to say that word -"  
- "Saint Michael! Your calumny absurd  
Shall I ignore...but what, pray  
Makes you so accuse me?"  
- "You spake for him, in his defence"  
- "I spoke for compromise -"  
- "What nonsense!"  
- "Almighty God, he does abuse me!"

- "We excuse your ire, your mighty passion,  
For you do love Us here the most  
Of any in Our sacred host;  
Your fiery words make such confession.  
But this ardour only just exceeds  
The hate you feel for Lucifer.  
To cooler heads must I defer;  
Brave Saint! Be wary! Hatred breeds  
A race of fancies. Without the sire  
Of Reason all are waifs and strays  
With whom no gentler infant plays;  
Who kindles loathings, plays with fire!"  
- "Aye, Lord." - And here he raised his face  
To stare at Glory as near he dare -  
- "I wish that I had arms to spare  
To fight for You and your pure race....  
I am mistaken...Lord Kennett, here, your hand....  
With doubt have I been overwrought...  
You spoke your mind and never sought  
Advantage."

- "Michael, I understand  
And thank you. Let us now be friends;  
I cannot hide my admiration  
Nor any here their approbation  
For one who thus his Lord defends."  
And all the Senate with single voice  
For Michael's constancy gave praise,

And many eyes with tears did glaze  
For this mighty heart, untrimmed by poise.  
And God said – “Michael you know We must,  
For a chance to heal Our great divide,  
Stop the wind and turn the tide  
Of history. And, Michael We must trust,  
Must trust as much as you must doubt.  
Watch Lucifer, We know you will.  
We trust you to. Such trust shall fill  
Any void which hollows out  
Of misgiving as We contemplate  
If Mephistopheles is genuine  
In sloughing off his serpent skin  
For the glory of Our great Estate.  
Michael, watch him. Con his ways  
With every new day, more and more.  
Hear his words. But We implore,  
Bring evidence that Satan strays.”

As all departed, called Michael  
His lieutenant, and whispered low  
- “Mark that fellow and follow  
Him. That shallow Kennet. Mark him well.”

\*

After five millennia Saint Peter said  
- “What joy is now! We fly with pleasure  
To Earth and wander all at leisure,  
By lakes by raging torrents fed,  
Through woods which cling to mountain sides  
Through villages where people sip  
A heady wine of fellowship,  
Where everyone at peace resides  
And no-one hungers, no-one craves;  
Yet in dangerous landscapes, never still,  
In transient fortune, good and ill  
Where fields may fill with grapes, or graves,  
Whence souls from decay are resurrected  
To alabaster’s cool perfection,  
Where of pain and sorrow is no conception  
For ever.

Or, such stasis may be rejected  
To walk once more wherever one will  
And heartily, bodily pleasures feel,  
As well as torments, sharp and real,  
And the senses virtuously fulfil  
Without excess. Or see bright bowers  
Of a museum where souls underwent  
Agonies, who would not repent,

Now in oblivion drowned by flowers.  
What a Genius, our Mighty Lord,  
Who has tamed the wilful breast of Man!  
And Lucifer, erstwhile Satan!  
For here he sits, his virtue assured  
By the guards of Michael vigilant,  
Surrounded by the cherubim  
Who love to sit and sing with him,  
As he plucks his lyre strings brilliant,  
Still shackled by terms of his probation,  
Yet ever cheerful, ever blithe  
Content within his beauty lithe  
To see in smiles its confirmation.”  
And Kennet said – “Your words are wise.  
The gates which once you did patrol  
Stand ever open and every soul  
May choose ever blue, or clouding, skies.  
May feel the burn of waspish stings,  
And then their gentle, cool relief,  
Or the plangent agony of grief,  
Yet the certain joy of future meetings  
With lovers who are lying dead,  
Both sweet memories or resurgent passions  
To please in varied, urgent fashions,  
To still the trembling loved one’s bed.  
Ah! The joy of fleeting pain!  
The fleeting joy of ecstasy!  
Yet the bliss of calm Eternity  
Within the balm of God’s domain!  
Could any universe this one excel?  
What other worlds, a multitude  
So varied in their pulchritude,  
Where never may a mortal dwell,  
Teem in this Divine Creation  
With beasts and plants astonishing!  
Now never needs admonishing  
Any soul for depredation.”  
- “How perfect is this Imperfection!  
This blend, variety of being!”  
Saint Peter turned, elated, seeing  
That Lucifer laughed in his direction.  
He was putting his silver lyre aside  
And rubbing where the shackles gripped,  
(He grimaced as they turned and slipped)  
And said, as he the gates decried,  
- “I could not help but overhear”  
(And as he spoke a guard made notes)  
“To what joys now Man himself devotes  
Beyond these gates! Thereto shall I also steer  
A gleeful course when I am free,

And in body feel the sun and rain  
And tender loving hands again,  
Then, in spirit, turn in ecstasy  
To Home from earthly holiday,  
To bask in God's eternal Beam  
Of love and mercy. Oh how I dream  
As every minute ticks away.  
Five millennia have I sat  
And must sit now five millennia more,  
Deprived of all that I adore;  
And yet I did agree to that!"

- And he smiled at Peter a smile so huge  
That his heart, his tender heart did melt  
And only his chafing suffering felt  
And did not suspect a subterfuge.  
Kennet saw and said – "Lord, a word."  
And drawing Peter swift aside  
Said – "Should Lucifer in chains abide  
When he is cured of sin? Absurd!  
Should we not now demand the key  
And ease these chains and shackles off  
Which have now chastised him long enough,  
And walk with him in gardens - free?"

And Peter stared at Lucifer  
As sweet cherubs on the cheek he kissed  
And, theatrically, did turn his wrist  
To rub relief in ankles sore.  
In Peter's eye a tear did start  
To witness such a touching scene  
Which determined him to intervene  
To draw a watching guard apart,  
Instructing him to fetch the key.

- "Lord Michael holds the key you seek."  
He replied with manner mild and meek.  
- "Then go and summon him to me!"

When Michael came he had been told  
By his lieutenant, his special guard,  
What in the garden had transpired,  
And was wondering what might unfold.  
Then straight did Peter turn and say  
- "Saint Michael, we would have him freed  
For we believe that he has need  
Of relief from chafes without delay."

- "Indeed! By whose authority  
Should this prisoner be unbound?  
Your summons doth me most astound,  
As if it came by God's decree!"

- "Saint Michael, what would be the harm  
Of giving Lucifer respite  
From shackles screwed on limbs too tight,

Would a little easing cause alarm?”  
- “A little walk, a little easing  
A little freedom, a little more  
Till gradually shall we restore  
To the Beast all rights, do all his pleasing!”  
- “Saint Michael! You do exceed your power  
These words are too intemperate.  
The key! Or else you may regret  
This display of pique and temper sour!”  
Their argument had drawn a crowd  
So then Lord Kennet intervened  
And pointing at the shackled fiend  
Said – “When shall he then be allowed  
To have of liberty a little taste?  
Shall five millennia pass till he  
Of all these dire restraints is free?  
On what logic is such cruelty based?”  
Saint Michael looked at Kennet hard  
And felt within a fury rise  
He could not stem, for Kennet’s eyes  
Were mocking him. He shouted – “Guard!  
Put this Kennet under arrest!”  
At which the crowd, now many strong,  
To which Kennet’s allies did belong  
Milled around in great unrest.  
Straight Michael went to Lucifer  
Who rubbed his legs, all innocence,  
Smarting with the pain intense,  
And to his face said – “Prisoner,  
Foul Poisoner of all that’s good  
I know what cunning game you play,  
That over Kennet you hold sway  
To split the Angel brotherhood!  
Saint Peter, would that you could see  
Through my eyes Satan’s purposes!  
His ploys and his conspiracies  
You miss through your credulity.  
- “Michael! What monstrous lack of tact!  
Him of treason you accuse,  
Me of foolishness. You abuse  
And exceed your powers, without one fact  
To prove what you assert and claim!”  
And followed by the noisy throng  
They hurried off, convictions strong  
That God the other saint would blame.  
- “God!” said Michael – “You gave me charge  
Of Lucifer, to watch him close  
And ever mark what words he chose  
Which slyest schemes might camouflage.  
This have I done five thousand years



So faithfully at your request;  
Now Peter, at his friend's behest,  
Against our orders interferes  
And tries to have the Fiend released,  
To take him for a little stroll,  
As if he might be on parole,  
In truth feels sorry for the Beast..."

- "Sire! Michael much exaggerates.  
This was a thought of common decency  
And never one of leniency,  
For on Lucifer each shackle grates.  
Is this confinement? Or is it torture?"  
(And many in the crowd applauded.)

- "What Kennet said has been recorded  
For him I demand forfeiture  
Of rights and freedoms in this realm...  
Read, Majesty, of his sedition  
To undermine my grave position  
And all precautions overwhelm."  
Now several in the crowd were jeering  
But fell silent while the Lord now read.  
When He had finished Kennet said

- "Majesty, I crave a hearing!  
That I was overcome with pity  
To see Lucifer with cherub singing  
Lovely lays through gardens ringing  
I do not deny, for I am guilty!  
With pure compassion you have filled me  
And I ask if it be reasonable  
To deem sweet pity treasonable,  
Sweet spring you have instilled in me?  
Great God of mercy. Now I crave  
Forgiveness for this weakest lapse!  
May Heaven's walls on me collapse  
If I am numbered Satan's slave!  
I thought, and great Saint Peter too,  
That centuries without transgression  
Made pointless such another session  
And that respite might be overdue.  
But I was wrong..."

- "No, you were right!"

Said Peter in a mighty passion  
- "Who could deem as sin compassion,  
Inspired by such a moving sight....  
There Lucifer entertaining, teaching  
With lyre tones each holy hymn  
To sing God's praises, cherubim,  
Fair conduct from them all beseeching?"

- "Peter, you are a mighty fool!"  
And every listener gasped to hear

One angel so insult his peer  
And looked for God to overrule.  
Now Gabriel, who had never spoken,  
Slowly to his feet did rise  
And gazing round with kindly eyes  
Said – “Verily, my heart is broken  
To see such Greats in ire wrangle  
When we have known such peace of mind  
Midst angels, souls and human kind.  
May my calm thought this knot untangle...  
It was I who went so long ago  
To tell a maid how she would bear  
A son, a part of Yahweh, there  
Who would on men such love bestow,  
Compassion for his sinning way  
Yet anger for the whispering snake;  
All links in history would He break  
And proclaim the dawning of a day  
When the sin is hateful not the sinner...  
Peter, you err when you believe  
The Devil is cured. You are naïve.  
Michael, you err, for at your inner  
You seethe with hatred unremitting;  
In five millennia shall he be freed;  
Perhaps ere then there will be need  
To test what liberty might bring.  
If a prisoner is not exposed  
To temptations of his wicked past  
How shall we know his vow might last,  
That his Sovereign, Sin, has been deposed?  
And if the sin is expiated  
And still the sinner hangs in chains  
What sense in purgatory remains?  
Might virtue then become frustrated?”  
(And the crowd applauded Gabriel.)  
- “Let cool compassion rule instead.....  
Now have I done. My mind is said.”  
And then a mighty hammer fell.  
- “We told you Michael, when you came  
With news of crime, to bring Us proof  
That still he walks on cloven hoof....  
To Us this goat you caught seems lame,  
Like Lucifer, it barely limps.  
Does Kennet play a double game?  
What is his real master’s name?  
Is he lieutenant to a millionimps  
Who hide behind the pillars here?”  
And laughter echoed through the palace  
Tinged with ridicule and malice,  
Anathema to Michael’s ear.

- "Lord Kennet! You exceed your powers,  
For one whole year shall be expelled;  
From you, Peter, shall be withheld  
Access to Lucifer, for as many hours  
As you fail to vow all interceding  
Shall ever more be made for him.  
Henceforth on lyre mere cherubim  
Shall Lucifer with airs be leading.  
Michael, you were precipitate  
In leaping to a false conclusion.  
If we think that change is all illusion  
In Lucifer, then let us put  
Him on yonder orb with all his crew  
And blast it to the farthest arm  
Of this great All, from way of harm.  
Michael, I have faith in you,  
But put suspicions in their place;  
Eyes may excel in their dissembling,  
The honest eyes of Truth resembling,  
Yet sometimes we must trust the face.  
Lucifer once a week shall walk  
Around the gardens with his guard  
Henceforth his chains shall chafe less hard...  
....And with promenaders may he talk...."  
Then Michael cried in loudest voice  
- "Despite these verdicts all is clear  
Whose counsel You prefer to hear...  
Now am I left with little choice  
But to resign this weighty task of mine."  
So saying, drew his shining blade  
And on the lowest step it laid  
And did his shaggy head incline.  
And though a heaving throng stood there  
Not one single sound was heard.  
This silence showed that all concurred  
On the import that his speech did bear.  
- "Is this how Our love should be repaid?"  
Said God now, barely murmuring.  
"Is this how you should treat your King  
Who you to mighty consort made?"  
- "I tell You, Lord, he is foul at heart.  
Have him brought and fix Your gaze,  
All-seeing eyes of sinful ways,  
Until You see he plays a part!"  
- "What shall be have We decided.  
Michael, still We claim to be  
More omniscient than thee!  
By your retort We feel derided!  
Once We banished Lucifer  
For pride and show of vile ambition.

Cantankerous pride is your condition,  
Which you in every word aver.  
Gabriel! To you I charge  
The care of Lucifer from now  
And you with judging powers endow,  
To chain or let him roam at large.”  
- “Oh misery!” Saint Michael groaned.  
- “How durst thou question Our decision!  
And if thou sharest not Our vision  
Be now by Me and Mine disowned!”  
Without a word then Michael turned  
And a bobbling sea of heads gave way  
As he crossed their passage in dismay  
And with fuels of shame and anger burned.  
In his eyes were welling tears of gall  
And pillars melted there like brooks  
As he left the throne to wondrous looks  
Of those not born at Satan’s Fall.  
*Apologize! God would forgive! -*  
His braking thoughts were urging now...  
But his striding pride would not allow;  
- *Never, as long as I may live!*  
He turned once more at Peter’s gate  
Of faces saw a silent sea  
Stare wide in incredulity.  
And left for ever God’s estate.  
And against the sky of sapphire blue  
Past rosy clouds, gold-hemmed by sun,  
On swan-white wings, of virtue spun,  
Down to waning earth he flew,  
Descending in a mountain wood  
With only streams for company  
And took for anonymity  
A simple form in flesh and blood,  
Until by death he would be blessed.  
Of immortality he had tired  
And nothing less than peace desired  
Within oblivion’s dark at rest.

Sly Lucifer had waited long.  
At last Saint Michael’s star had waned!  
He calculated what might be gained,  
Beguiling Gabriel with his song.

This latter saint began with vigour;  
When Lucifer had leave to stroll  
He could not suborn a single soul  
For Gabriel dogged his steps with rigour.  
But there came a year when Lucifer  
By dint of clever, winning ways,

By languid, innocent displays  
Was appointed Heaven's gardener.  
Though ever close his guards stood by,  
Monotony had dulled their edge.  
He then began to take advantage  
By whispering his comments wry...  
- "If a being be omniscient  
His nose scents all there is to know..  
So knows he here what seeds I sow  
And what shall grow, to what extent?  
Ah, what a know-all, nosy God!"  
And all the cherubs laughed and hooted  
As Lucifer, leaping, leather-booted  
Upon his seedbeds danced and trod.  
Soon one soul had made complaints  
That a cherub of known urbanity  
Had uttered some profanity  
And cast off his polite constraints.  
Saint Michael's stern lieutenant loyal  
Approached his new Lord, Gabriel  
And of these matters all did tell  
Yet instantly did he recoil.  
- "This is nothing! Cherubim err.  
I have often watched and am content  
His time with them is not misspent  
This is no fault of Lucifer.  
These fears as groundless, false I find  
Which in thy heart have been aroused.  
To Michael's cause wert thou espoused.  
Henceforth shalt thou be reassigned."  
And when Saint Michael's trusty aide  
To new perversions drew attention  
He was taken straight in close detention,  
On charge that he had disobeyed.  
And as he stared between the bars  
Lord Kennet passing, stopped and smirked  
And making sure no soldier lurked  
He pointedly gazed up at Mars  
Then found the rising moon and said,  
- "Soon these two shall be aligned,  
Mars and moon; whence those confined  
Shall victors in these precincts tread..."  
The lieutenant lustily did shout  
Of boils of treachery soon to burst  
That heaven's citizenry was cursed,  
That imps of hell would soon break out!  
Soldiers came, then Gabriel  
Who, patient, heard him out and said  
That he was feverish, should be bled,  
That he of groundless fears did yell.

When days then weeks without event  
Passed into months and then a year  
And insurgency did not appear  
No soul to this their credence lent.  
But Lucifer had plotted well;  
This calm he turned to his fiendish cause  
And often drew a hushed applause  
For whispered schemes dreamt up in hell:  
....”Why dost thou show thy stamp collection  
To this fair soul who nods her head  
Politely? I’d wager much, instead  
She’d rather see....thy firm....erection....  
....If I were ruler here (and not the least!)  
Much altered then would be thy heaven...  
Much more like Earth, for I would leaven  
Its flatness with a seething yeast!  
....Dost thou forget strong tastes of wine  
Its warmth as it trickles down thy throat?  
To boredom, swiftest antidote?  
....Feel yet, in heaven, a tingling spine!  
If all the saved are yet immortal  
Can swap sublunacy for the sublime  
Feel the real or ethereal at any time  
What is the point of heaven’s portal?  
Let all as ancient gods carouse  
Creating freaks for entertainment,  
In such variety with no arraignment  
From a god whose ire should nought arouse!  
For god should bless not criticize  
The sports which any might invent  
Which stifling codes would circumvent...  
Free your minds from heaven’s spies,  
To produce what monsters any will!  
And if pain or catastrophe ensue  
Our powers strong would sure undo  
The impact of the grossest ill!  
What excitement! What a joy!  
What times of sheer hilarity!  
In heaven’s insularity  
A host of sports that never cloy!”  
Lucifer sensed exactly who  
He could beguile with naughty thoughts,  
These dreams of endless, mindless sports,  
And to whom such chaos was taboo.  
Kennet had smuggled him a list  
Of those who had stayed in Purgatory  
The longest fired to purity  
The ones who such could least resist.  
When he had scattered many a seed  
In many a soul swelled rotten fruit;

And he noted thence with eye astute  
Where special discontent did breed.

Gabriel woke and began to feel  
A change in heaven. Some seemed bored  
And loath to sing and praise their Lord,  
Less happy with the commonweal.  
So Gabriel broached his fears to God  
And told him of environs tense  
Which he in every nook could sense.  
To which many angels there did nod.  
God knew that Satan was to blame  
And said – “Shall Evil now prevail?  
Shall once again Our Purpose fail?  
Shall this Creation end in shame?”  
And Peter looked at Gabriel  
And raised his eyes in wonderment.  
- “Is this of All the fundament,  
If heaven win the day or hell??”  
- “Gabriel, We charge you now,  
Put Satan under close arrest  
Then shall We face the sternest test  
Since Satan made his worthless vow.”  
And wearily He raised His mace  
To seal with light this great command  
Yet held it with a shaking hand  
And its fading almost showed His face.  
Then Gabriel and Peter flew,  
With guards marched in and fettered him  
And with four uplifting every limb  
The Fiend from gardens swift withdrew.  
- “Too late!” He shouted laughing loud  
Pointing to the rising moon  
- “Soon from there a great typhoon  
Shall sweep away your master proud!  
My soldiers even now break free  
Led by him of Michael’s guard,  
By his mistreatment schooled and scarred,  
To swear fidelity to me!  
A liquor of sweet fruits I gave  
Which from my garden I did brew  
To intoxicate his retinue  
And turn each slaver into slave!  
My trusty knights, my dire brigade,  
Relish now a fight gainst good;  
The bitter seething in their blood  
By sweet revenge shall be allayed.”  
His captors let him down and stared  
All anxious at the rising moon,  
Shining like a great doubloon

And watched with loathing how there fared  
From craters, bleak and dark-rimmed eyes,  
Spiralling in fiendish vigour,  
Ever blacker, ever bigger  
Five columns each in line, like flies;  
And as they watched the spirals split,  
Three turned to heaven and two to Earth  
And circling its ocean girth  
Upon the darkening land they lit.  
The buried armouries they found  
And wrenching off their rusting locks  
Removed their vicious, evil stocks  
And then took off, to heaven bound.  
Then Kennet came with renegades,  
A thousand souls by Sod beguiled,  
Held up his crooked hand and smiled...  
- "Now we control these ways and glades!"  
- "What treason, Kennet, dost thou intend?"  
Shouted Peter, much aggrieved.  
- "Of thy sword and office be relieved;  
Enslaved, before thy Master bend!"  
- "Never! Till all time be done!  
O Michael! Now has Heaven need  
Of thy bold heart to intercede  
Ere Earth just one day more has spun!"  
Now Satan spoke in darker tone,  
His proper voice had he disguised,  
- "Thou fool! Thou shouldst have realised  
What great Saint Michael knew alone...  
Ah, how I wish he were my ally,  
Wiser than all this paltry host,  
Than father, son and holy ghost..."  
- "What sacrilege!" did Gabriel cry.  
- "Be silent, meekest messenger!  
What folly, thy philosophy!  
To think thou couldst refashion.....Me!  
Mephisto! Me, the Great Revenger!  
Yet who is more naïve than all?  
Who could not see beyond my ploys?  
As innocent as callow boys  
Who mouth his praise in choir stall!  
The lord himself! I sense his might,  
The fire, the light he owns have dwindled  
Which now by me shall be rekindled!  
What dark desires shall they requite!  
And dreams forgotten, at dawn suppressed,  
Queer visions of a world, half-lit,  
Where gurning beasts of fancy flit,  
Shall all appear at my behest!  
Peculiars shall I incorporate,



Strange thoughts which souls desire and dread,  
Shall tumble out from drunken head,  
What chimeras shall I soon create!"

And as he spoke, in every square,  
His serfs, sharp-winged, began to land  
With all their wicked contraband  
And soon were milling everywhere,  
Whooping, firing rounds in glee,  
Disarming old Saint Michael's squad,  
Mocking, vilifying God  
Whose servants then began to flee.  
Then Satan raised his hands aloft  
And all fell silent in his gaze,  
Whose beauty did all heaven amaze,  
And in a voice full deep, but soft  
Said – "All who hear Us must obey,  
Now We are here sole Sovereign,  
Our dynasty shall here begin  
When We ascend the throne this day!  
And when We own that mighty seat  
Whence universal power doth flow  
We shall repay the vows we owe  
To make the universe complete,  
Of Our Conception, of Our Desire  
With other instruments than those  
Whence oafs did fawning hymns compose..."

And taking up an ancient lyre  
He dashed it into smithereens;  
His imp brought him a violin  
And a jolly jig he did begin  
And ever faster played till scenes  
Of helpless souls in reels cavorting  
Were rife in heaven's holy precincts  
In touch with earthy, baser instincts  
The calmer, higher mind aborting.  
And when at last he stopped they fell  
And all in squirming heaps were strewn,  
Squealing for another tune,  
Completely under Satan's spell.

- "There will be time enough for songs  
More stirring all than this poor one!  
When the boring god of gloom has gone  
And I hold sway with heaven's throngs!"

And followed by his loyal band  
And dancing crowds, forthwith he flew  
And scattered far the loyal few  
Who stayed in vain for God's command.  
He shoved the cedar doors apart  
And looked towards the shining throne  
Where, faded more, God sat alone

Slumping with a heavy heart;  
And raising clumsily His mace  
He pointed it at Lucifer,  
But this did nothing him deter  
And staring at His ancient face  
Said – “God you must concede defeat!  
For even if you use your lance  
To send Us to the dark expanse  
Of space, you see how souls do greet  
Reforms which only We can make.  
All yearn deep down for joy and pleasure;  
You offer them in smaller measure  
Than they desire. Your great mistake!  
Men’s impulses are streams in spate,  
Which morals dam but ne’er dissolve,  
For of urgent stuff did all evolve.  
Whose flaw is yours. Now abdicate!”  
These final words rang out and hung  
In the silence which received his speech;  
And then, again, God’s hand did reach  
To grip his mace, which fire flung.  
But by a golden buckler shielded  
He gave God back His angry light...  
And when all looked again in fright  
The throne was empty. God had yielded.  
And laughing, Satan took his seat  
And all astonished eyes surveyed.  
Now was his long-planned conquest made!  
And, arms aloft, he cried in heat  
- “Let every soul its flesh regain  
And never more let pleasures cloy!  
Let life, our mistress give us joy!  
Be ever banished guilt and pain!”  
And God’s imperial mace he brandished  
Yet no confirming light shone out  
No matter how the Fiend might shout,  
How often then he whined and wished.  
And then - **a Voice** - more terrifying  
A Voice no soul had heard before  
Louder than storm and ocean roar  
Sent all the fickle spirits flying.  
- “O Fiend! O Man, his fiendish kind  
That thought they might subvert Our Might  
And then to Evil bend Our Light  
Know now what issues from Our Mind:  
A creature pure, unflawed, We seek;  
This newest one had been the best  
So We put it to this stringent test:  
Could Good survive its Source grown weak?  
Were souls in heaven, of sinning shriven,

From Evil's overtures immune?  
Could they resist its jangling tune,  
When by Our good biddings none were driven?  
Would obedience hear a weary Master?  
Would well-schooled ears shut Evil out?  
Yet, We knew, We knew without a doubt  
That all would end in this disaster!  
A curse on matter!! It is sin incarnate!  
If matter be, then sin must be!  
All atoms seek supremacy,  
In matter sin resides, innate!  
And yet...Our task as great Creator,  
As Shaker of eternal dice  
Makes Us seek a Paradise  
Of this paradox of Saint and Traitor...  
For matter freed is ever flying  
From Our moulding Hand to liberty  
Asserts itself and will be free  
Our laws obeying...Our Law defying!  
How can Satan be debarred?  
For when We blow old ash to coals  
He burns there, later too in souls;  
So starts each Cosmos evil-starred!

Now this one, evil-starred, must end,  
It is broken and can never mend."

The captive throne where Satan sat  
Began to glow blue hot, vibrate.  
And when he knew his burning fate  
At God these words of fury spat,  
- "In every bloom, in every seed,  
In every breeze, in every brook,  
In every lip, in eye, in look,  
Sin and poison shall I breed!" -  
And saying this, his flesh caught fire  
His eyes flowed silver down his chest  
And in a blackened, swirling void the rest  
Of him went down entire.  
And then the throne turned molten gold  
And surged around a rent in space,  
Which in its spinning grew apace,  
As deep in heaven thunder rolled.  
The East turned indigo, nigh black,  
The western rim a crimson hue,  
Which a piercing, orange eye peered through  
Till all at once a livid crack  
Of lightning split the firmament  
Whence spilt a shoal of stars like rain,  
And when the storm-lash cracked again

The moon, cut free, in swift descent  
Crashing, crushed her mother sleeping,  
Her Earth, whose seas in steaming mist  
And boiling clouds the Alchemist  
Drove off to space with lavas seeping;  
Cross continents great fires spread  
The scorch went deep and deeper still  
And burned into her heart until  
All that boiled was molten lead;  
And then the very sun, that eye  
More reddened now, began to spark  
And at its midst a purple dark  
Began to spread and fill the sky,  
Against which souls as white as shrouds  
Fell down in prayer and sorely wept  
As heaven by great quakes was swept  
And deluged by Earth's fleeing clouds;  
Statues, fountains, columns fell,  
White marble cracked and turned to dust  
As everywhere through riven crust  
Flames leapt from a reforming hell.  
Each saint and demon, man and soul,  
All beasts of every ilk and form  
Were caught up in the whirling Storm,  
Hurled, howling, in the spinning Hole;  
And then the smouldering rocks and gas,  
The planets, all the galaxies,  
Arrested in their wayward sprees....  
Till utter darkness came to pass....

In Utter Darkness God then slumbered  
His longest sleep and never dreamt.  
Not one atom of His last attempt  
The void beyond Himself encumbered.  
On His couch, the rippling universe,  
Tightly wrapped, He never stirred,  
No light leaked out, no whisper heard,  
No single mite escaped His Purse.  
The Night that kept Him had no borne...

Then all at once a silver chink,  
His waking eye, began to blink.  
New stuff began His loins to spawn...  
Its inception had awoken Him.

Changed slightly were its formulae,  
Less sprightly strained at Gravity  
And burned less brightly, rim to rim.  
God marked the change and deemed it good;  
Ere long new galaxies were swarming

Wherein hot sapphire stars were forming,  
A blue and lustrous sisterhood.  
And surveying all that He had wrought,  
He picked the coolest of them all,  
And, gathering dust, He let it fall  
And set its circling years at nought.  
Till on their several paths, bright spheres,  
Glowing white with golden tails,  
Like galleons with fullest sails,  
Had crossed their star a billion years.  
He moved one to a farther ring,  
The largest world, which then with ice  
He pelted till a paradise  
Was endowed with every lovely thing  
Which into being He could dream;  
Into streams and oceans glittering fish,  
Of all colours in His Mind, did wish,  
What birds and beasts did He esteem  
To complement each emerald wood!  
This planet was a perfect place,  
So vast that none could fill its space  
With their own kind. God deemed this good.  
He had fashioned no carnivorous beast,  
No fly, no flea, no parasite,  
Corrupting things with Satan's spite,  
Not in mightiest, not in least.  
In a violet East the blue star rose  
And, caped in silver, swift she sped.  
At her fierce breath the rainclouds fled  
And when she set the mountains froze.  
God visited a forest deep,  
And from Himself He made a man  
Then after him a kindly woman  
And whispered laws which they must keep:  
To love Himself and love each other  
To educate and love their offspring  
To respect the lives of everything,  
Hold sacrosanct their spinning mother.....  
Who span one juicy, luscious fruit,  
Yellow-skinned, akin to pear,  
Which grew in wild abundance there.  
Yet its scented flesh would all pollute;  
This golden fruit must they never taste  
For if they did and disobeyed  
Their lives serene would be dismayed  
And all their children be disgraced.  
This fruit should never be consumed  
And if they took one tiny bite  
A thirst or hunger to requite  
Their lovely race would all be doomed.

They vowed to God and vowed to tell  
All their sons and daughters each  
That they should never strain to reach  
Those fruits which high in trees did swell.  
For in the forest did abound  
All proper fruits which they could eat;  
And never did they yearn for meat  
Of bird or beast or fish they found.  
The man and woman loved to lie  
And always in great joy they mated,  
Were never of each other sated  
As golden days and nights raced by.

With their many children in the wood  
They came across the thriving tree.  
They made them stoop and bend a knee  
And promise that they understood  
These golden fruits to never try,  
No matter how their scent might please;  
To ascend these tall, forbidden trees  
And eat would make the eater die.  
They slept beneath the canopy  
And their youngest watched its boughs, entranced,  
As in breezes and in moonlight danced  
Of sunny fruits, a panoply.  
And one fell by his couch so near  
Its perfume caused his head to spin  
That a hunger welling up within  
Might overcome his tutored fear.  
But he stilled his hand and went to sleep  
And dreamt of a golden, singing bird,  
One he had never seen or heard  
Which round his drowsy head did creep.  
It whistled in his ear so sweet;  
And then it stretched, all golden plumed  
And pecking, of that fruit consumed,  
And brought him some, in beak, to eat.  
And when he woke it was in his hand  
And in his mouth a juicy bite,  
Quickening his appetite,  
The very fruit which God had banned.

The broken vow could not be mended.  
Here sin begins again, God saw.  
And, cackling now, like any daw,  
The golden bird, turned red, ascended.

## GENESIS

i

Nothing. Not even is there pregnant space;  
And is locked away whatever shall be;  
Yet might not ever be. There, not a trace  
Of substance may allay this nullity.  
Light might never shine on flickery shade,  
No stars their fiery boundaries define;  
Around them nor are bounding planets made,  
There is no winding tight nor long decline  
Of Time; no tick, once struck, of endless Time,  
No measure; dimensionless to gauge  
Is Nothing. No whispering, no echo, no rhyme  
Has Nothing.

May God this Pointlessness assuage?

ii

God stirs. The Universe emerges  
From His loins; chaotic, formless, dark;  
God moves and blows and thence there surges  
A Light aflame from kindling spark  
And all the fleeing stars take fire  
That their spinning worlds see Night and Day;  
Some seas and firmaments acquire  
Of fish and birds a vast array,  
And their continents with creatures teem,  
Of all degrees in size and kind;  
When God surveys His wondrous Scheme  
It pleases His inventive Mind.

iii

And seizing worlds with care inspects  
Of the numberless, the gaseous, one terrestrial orb,  
And as He cons it God reflects  
What hosts of things it may absorb;  
For it is fabulous. Great mountains roar  
A lava gold; its whirling clouds and polar caps  
Storm indigo, or are white with storm in store;  
It swirls blue with sea which silver laps  
At sandy beaches bound by bands of green,  
Astir with creatures painted every hue;  
Their shapes enchant His gazing eye serene,  
All that His miraculous shades imbue.

iv

Yet no beastly eye appreciates  
The Genius of His mighty hands  
Nor the wonders of His great Estates;  
To be the steward of these lands

To understand that He, Creator  
Had made all Heaven and Earth entire,  
He craves a sentient spectator,  
Who will stare and all these works admire.  
And from a mound of darkest soil  
He makes a man and thence a female  
To cherish Eden and not despoil  
The beauty of His verdant Vale.

v

They saw and all those sunlit groves admired;  
The myriads of leaf, of flower, of bird,  
And walked together lithe and unattired;  
In naked loins were swelling passions stirred  
Till, lying clinging in a clearing bright  
Beneath a bower of trees and Heaven's blue  
Each did the other's longings soft requite  
Till with his seed did Adam Eve imbue.  
Upon their loving union God had smiled  
On delights which thrive on burning, urgent skin  
And envisaged Eve full-rounded, filled with child  
To found a race of beings free of Sin.

vi

And when they woke a moon had risen high  
And in the dappled cool did they embrace  
Till from a stream they heard a whispered sigh  
And thought they saw a faun depart the place.  
The faun, transformed, became His Watchful Eyes.  
Which had lingered, seeing Adam join with Eve  
Who now rose to hide away from forest spies  
In bracken which their trembling hands did cleave;  
And came upon a moonlight silvered tree  
Whence golden fruits erotically did pend  
And seemed to promise luscious ecstasy.  
So through its boughs did Adam swift ascend.

vii

God spoke to Adam as he stretched his hand  
- "The fruit you pick shall brew in you dismay;  
To taste its juice would let you understand  
My Laws; and cause your very death this day."  
And Adam clambered down and looked afraid;  
To disobey the Lord he had not meant;  
He looked around the golden, dawnlit glade,  
Bejeweled with dew, and saw the whole extent,  
Of disobeying God, the awful cost;  
The warming sun and crystal, quickening air,  
This precious gem of Life would all be lost;  
Yet he tasted in his mouth a dry despair.



viii

And straight he drew his lovely Eve to him  
And gently stroked her lustrous, sable head,  
Caressed and kissed each dark and fragrant limb  
And told her quietly what the Lord had said.  
Her widening eyes grew wild and filled with awe  
As she imagined both the consequence and taste  
Of such a fruit consumed beyond God's law  
And gripping Adam's hand made off in haste.  
Yet berries, nuts and fruits which God had given  
Soon to Eve seemed barely half as sweet  
And from her breast was all contentment driven  
And the honey-scented fruit she yearned to eat.

ix

She felt the breath of God wherever they stood  
And as they lay in love, His staring eye;  
So she beckoned Adam deeper in the wood  
Denser, where in bushes they might lie;  
And as they crept Eve stopped and raised a hand  
And pointed out a new forbidden tree,  
Much taller than the first, with contraband  
Of bounteous fruit, bewildering to see.  
And as they gaped they fell beneath its spell  
Which Adam was the first, alarmed, to break  
And dragging Eve away he found a dell  
And there within a couch of leaves did make.

x

And there they slept beneath the soaring moon  
By choirs of sapphire stars which God had swept  
To shimmer in her pool, a vast lagoon;  
And from a distance silent vigil kept.  
The night flowed on and then the moon descended;  
Eve's dreaming eyes were flickering like leaves  
And in her dream – of leaves – a serpent wended  
And whispered in her ear – “God's word deceives!  
He told you not to eat of nut or seed  
Or fruit which grows upon or falls from any tree!  
So does nothing grow in Eden you might need?  
Is there nothing here to eat for him and thee?”

xi

“How can this be? Art thou a simpleton?”  
And Eve began to mutter in her dream  
- “Of fruits we may not eat there is but one,

Yon amber fruit does Adam poisoned deem...”  
- “Does Adam deem?? God did not forewarn thee!  
Art thou sure if Adam tells the truth or lies?  
Is God or Adam thy authority?  
To eat that delicious fruit would make thee wise  
And rival God...”

- “But it would bring us death!”  
- “A jealous God has tricked thee with this terror.  
Do not despair of thy immortal breath.  
Eat and thou shalt instant see thy error!”

xii

When Eve awoke a shimmering sun had risen  
And lighted up those golden, brimming boughs.  
She recalled the dream, the serpent’s hissed derision  
And thought - “We merely do as God allows!  
This God who follows us where’er we go-  
I would be free to follow my own mind...  
And to know what God alone reserves to know...  
I hate this God! The bane of humankind!”  
And bold she went, left Adam, sleeping still,  
And found that tree which flourished in her thought  
And watched as one twig did its kingpin spill  
Which holding out one trembling hand, she caught.

xiii

And as she did she broke its puckered skin  
And exposed the yellow, glistening flesh beneath,  
Whose fragrance caused her youthful head to spin  
And in her urgent blood desire to seethe.  
In sudden anguish she flung the fruit away  
Yet, instinctively, she licked her dripping hand  
And all the other fruits were earth and clay  
Compared to this, the fruit which God had banned.  
And frantically she found the fruit again  
Which tender to her longing lips did draw  
Whereupon it left a scarlet stain....  
At every bite she desired to taste it more.

xiv

Then thinking of her Adam back she flew  
And held the fruit half-eaten by his head  
Its giddy scent God’s warning did undo  
And he ate thereof. But then awoke in dread  
Was this the very fruit that God forbade?  
This awful thought sang round and round his mind;  
When Eve confirmed his fears it drove him mad,  
And he spat it out, the juice, the flesh and rind.  
In shame they clothed with leaves their nakedness,  
From a breeze, which chill had sprung, now were they hidden

But to the breeze, the voice of God, must Eve confess  
She had done just as the wily snake had bidden.

xv

Though Adam blamed his Eve did God curse all,  
He deemed the snake and him as much to blame;  
That slinking coil in dust He made to crawl  
That its hatchlings Woman's children stood to maim  
And so the snake's might bite hers on the heel;  
And Eve would bear her offspring in distress  
And gripping pain in pregnancy would feel  
And subject to man would live in abjectness.  
He turned to Adam and bade him watch the soil  
Which now in drought all writhed with thorn and weed;  
To whence he sprang would he return to toil  
To eke what meagre grains his kin might feed.

xvi

Back to the soil would his sinful kin be borne  
When breath their mortal bodies left at last.  
Now he and Eve a wandering race would spawn  
To discover of the world its canyons vast,  
To turn to use what elements God created,  
Whence they could smelt their weapons and their tools,  
Whence hooks and traps ingenious could be baited,  
Whence fruit of vines could turn the wise to fools,  
And wander ever further from their Source  
In every land find new experience  
And follow hence the river's snaking course.  
And thrive a while in disobedience.

### **ADAM**

God needed one to love and praise his doing  
To gaze at heaven whence shone his starred elation  
To be dazed, amazed on Earth at his construing,  
At the manifest, the wealth of his creation.

He bent thereto his zest, each element,  
Atoms of fang and thorn and scorpion tail  
All scattered in his mystic soil he spent,  
Invested in Adam that he, of all, prevail.

And gave to him the holy gift of Mind  
And urged him to obedience of his laws;  
Although a work of furies, be inclined  
To master them and meld them to God's Cause.

Yet flawed was all the stuff that made his limbs  
In sharpness and in thrusting built to sting,  
Distracted by his lusts and dreams and whims,

Was ill-designed to do God's great designing.

For not enough of trust did he possess;  
All far out-pawed by curiosity,  
He bit forbidden fruit in wilfulness  
And dreamt conceits of foul monstrosity

Perceived, believed that he might wear God's crown,  
Command the Earth to yield the wealth he prized  
All secrets, formulae to his renown  
Which lesser fames and forms than him despised.

Amassing more than he should ever need  
Or wish, and never with his owning satisfied;  
And paying to his higher mind no heed  
Fell victim to his foolish greed, and died.