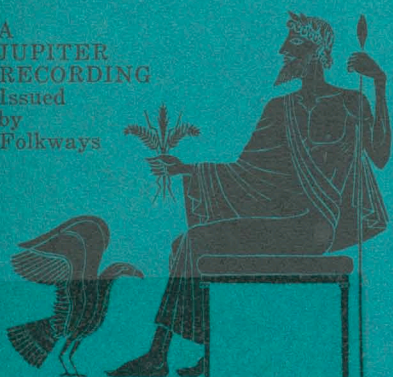


ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH VERSE (Volume 1)

READ BY:

Jill Balcon
V. C. Clinton-Baddeley
John Glen
Christopher Hassall
Harry Hutchinson
C. Day Lewis

A
JUPITER
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1961
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MUSIC LP

CONTENTS:

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THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK
 The Wise Men of Gotham (V.C.C.-B. & J.)
 JOHN CLARE
 On A Lane In Spring (J.G.)
 JOHN MASEFIELD
 Mother Carey (V.C.C.-B.)
 LORD TENNYSON
 The Brook (J.B.)
 WALTER de la MARE
 Five Eyes (V.C.C.-B.)
 JAMES STEPHENS
 The Fifteen Acres (H.H.)
 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
 I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud (Ch. H.)
 W. S. GILBERT
 The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell" (V.C.C.-B.)
 WILLIAM BLAKE
 England, Awake! (V.C.C.-B.)
 JOHN KEATS
 Old Meg (J.B.)
 EDWARD LEAR
 The Owl and The Pussycat (V.C.C.-B.)
 RUDYARD KIPLING
 The Snow Lies Thick on Valley Forge (J.)
 JOHN CLARE
 Clock-a-Clay (J.G.)
 RALPH HODGSON
 Eve (V.C.C.-B.)
 THOMAS HARDY
 Weathers (J.G.)
 W. B. YEATS
 The Fiddler of Dooney (H.H.)
 EDWARD LEAR
 Calico Pie (V.C.C.-B.)
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Issued by special arrangement with
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Band 5: WALTER de la MARE
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Band 3: EDWARD LEAR
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The Snow Lies Thick on Valley Forge (J.B.)
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Band 6: RALPH HODGSON
Eve (V.C.C.-B.)
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THE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM

Seamen three! What men be ye?
Gotham's three wise men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine;
And your ballast is old wine.

Who art thou, so fast adrift?
I am he they call Old Care.
Here on board we will thee lift.
No: I may not enter there.
Wherefore so? 'Tis Jove's decree,
In a bowl Care may not be;
In a bowl Care may not be.

Fear ye not the waves that roll?
No; in charmed bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine;
And your ballast is old wine.

Thomas Love Peacock

ON A LANE IN SPRING

A little lane—the brook runs close beside,
And spangles in the sunshine, while the fish
glide swiftly by;
And hedges leafing with the green springtide,
From out their greenery the old birds fly,
And chirp and whistle in the morning sun.
The pilewort glitters 'neath the pale blue sky.
The little robin has its nest begun,
And grass-green linnets round the bushes fly.
How mild the spring comes in! The daisy buds
Lift up their golden blossoms to the sky.
How lovely are the pingles and the woods!
Here a beetle runs—and there a fly
Rests on the arum leaf in bottle-green,
And all the spring in this sweet lane is seen.

John Clare

MOTHER CAREY

Mother Carey? * She's the mother o' the witches
'N' all *them* sort o' rips;
She's a fine gell to look at, but the hitch is,
She's a sight too fond of ships.
She lives upon a iceberg to the norred,
'N' her man he's Davy Jones,

'N' she combs the weeds upon her forred
With pore drowned sailors' bones.

She's the mother o' the wrecks, 'n' the mother
Of all big winds as blows;
She's up to some deviltry or other
When it storms, or sleets, or snows
The noise of the wind's her screamin',
'I'm arter a plump, young, fine,
Brass-buttoned, beefy-ribbed young seam'n
So as me 'n' my mate kin dine.'

She's a hungry old rip 'n' a cruel
For sailor-men like we,
She's give a many mariners the gruel
'N' a long sleep under sea.
She's the blood o' many a crew upon her
'N' the bones of many a wreck,
'N' she's barnacles a-growing' on her
'N' shark's teeth round her neck.

I ain't never had no schoolin'
Nor read no books like you,
But I knows 't ain't healthy to be foolin'
With that there gristly two.
You're young, you thinks, 'n' you're lairy,
But if you're to make old bones,
Steer clear, I says, o' Mother Carey
'N' that there Davy Jones.

John Masefield

* Mother Carey and Davy Jones are famous mythical figures among English sailors. Davy Jones lives at the bottom of the sea; and a man who has drowned, or a ship which has sunk, is said to have 'gone to Davy Jones's locker'. The whole poem is written in dialect. For instance, 'norred' is a sailor's pronunciation of 'northward'.

THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Lord Tennyson

FIVE EYES

In Hans' old Mill his three black cats
Watch his bins for the thieving rats.
Whisker and claw, they crouch in the night,
Their five eyes smouldering green and bright;

Squeaks from the flour sacks, squeaks from where
the cold wind stirs on the empty stair,
Squeaking and scampering, everywhere.
Then down they pounce, now in, now out,
At whisking tail, and sniffing snout;
While lean old Hans he snores away
Till peep of light at break of day;
Then up he climbs to his creaking mill,
Out come his cats all grey with meal—
Jekkel, and Jessup, and one-eyed Jill.

Walter de la Mare

THE FIFTEEN ACRES

I

I cling and swing
On a branch, or sing
Through the cool clear hush of morning O!

Or sling my wing
On the air, and bring
To sleepier birds a warning O!

That the night's in flight!
And the sun's in sight!
And the dew is the grass adorning O!

And the green leaves swing
As I sing, sing, sing:
Up by the river,
Down the dell,
To the little wee nest,
Where the big tree fell,
So early in the morning O!

II

I flit and twit
In the sun for a bit,
When his light so bright is shining O!

Or sit, and fit
My plumes, or knit
Straw plaits for the nests nice lining O!

And she, with glee,
Shows unto me,
Underneath her wing reclining O!

And I sing that Peg,
Has an egg, egg, egg!
Up by the oat-field,
Round the mill,
Past the meadow,
Down the hill;
So early in the morning O!

III

I stoop and swoop
On the air, or loop

Through the trees, and then go soaring O!

To group, with a troop.
On the skiey poop,
While the wind behind is roaring O!

I skim and swim
By a clouds red rim;
And up to the azure flooring O!

And my wide wings drip,
As I slip, slip, slip,
Down through the rain-drops.
Back where Peg
Broods in the nest
On the little white egg.
So early in the morning O!

James Stephens

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

'Twas on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone on a piece of stone
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid,
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been
drinking,

And so I simply said:

"Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
However you can be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,*
He spun this painful yarn:

* Chewing tobacco.

"'Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian Sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul).
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said 'Here!' to the muster-roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain
bold.

And the mate of the *Nancy* brig
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite.
And the crew of the captain's gig.

"For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So we drawed a lot, and, accordin' shot
The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, 'Which
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose,
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshipped me;
But we'd both be blown if we'd either be stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

" 'I'll be eat if you dines off me,' says TOM;
 'Yes, that,' say I, 'you'll be,—
 I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I;
 And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

"Says he, 'Dear JAMES, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me*,
While I can—and will—cook *you*!' "

"So he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped
shalot,
And some sage and parsley too.

" 'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
 'Twill soothing be if I let you see
How extremely nice you'll smell.' "

"And he stirred it round and round and round,
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his
squeals
In the scum of the boiling broth.

"And I eat that cook in a week or less,
And—as I eating be
The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,
For a wessel in sight I see!

* * * * *

"And I never larf, and I never smile,
And I never lark nor play,
But sit and croak, and a single joke
I have—which is to say:

" 'Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.' "

W. S. Gilbert

ENGLAND! AWAKE!

England! awake! awake! awake!
Jerusalem thy sister calls!

Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death,
And close her from thy ancient walls?

Thy hills and valleys felt her feet
Gently upon their bosoms move:
Thy gates beheld sweet Zion's ways;
Then was a time of joy and love.

And now the time returns again:
Our souls exult, and London's towers
Receive the Lamb of God to dwell
In England's green and pleasant bowers.

William Blake

OLD MEG

Old Meg she was a Gipsy,
And liv'd upon the Moors:
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
Her Sisters larchen trees—
Alone with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the Moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen Yew
She wove, and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited Mats o' Rushes,
And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon:
An old red blanket cloak she wore;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago!

John Keats

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,

They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.

The Owl looked up to the stars above,

And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,

What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,

You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!

How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried.

But what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away, for a year and a day,

To the land where the Bong-tree grows

And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood

With a ring at the end of his nose,

His nose,

His nose,

With a ring at the end of his nose.

'Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling

Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'

So they took it away, and were married next day

By the Turkey who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince, and slices of quince,

Which they ate with a runcible* spoon;

And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,

They danced by the light of the moon,

The moon,

The moon,

They danced by the light of the moon.

Edward Lear

* The word 'runcible' is a joke word invented by the author. In another poem he describes himself as wearing a 'runcible hat'.

THE SNOW LIES THICK ON

VALLEY FORGE

The snow lies thick on Valley Forge,

The ice on the Delaware,

But the poor dead soldiers of King George

They neither know nor care—

Not though the earliest primrose break

On the sunny side of the lane,

And scuffling rookeries awake

Their England's spring again.

They will not stir when the drifts are gone

Or the ice melts out of the bay,

And the men that served with Washington

Lie all as still as they.

They will not stir though the mayflower blows

In the moist dark woods of pine,

And every rock-strewn pasture shows

Mullein and columbine.

Each for his land, in a fair fight,

Encountered, strove, and died,

And the kindly earth that knows no spite

Covers them side by side.

She is too busy to think of war;

She has all the world to make gay,

And, behold, the yearly flowers are

Where they were in our fathers' day!

Golden-rod by the pasture wall

When the columbine is dead,

And sumach leaves that turn, in fall,

Red as the blood they shed.

Rudyard Kipling

EVE

Eve, with her basket, was

Deep in the bells and grass,

Wading in bells and grass

Up to her knees,

Picking a dish of sweet

Berries and plums to eat,

Down in the bells and grass

Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a

Corner the cobra lay,

Curled round a bough of the

Cinnamon tall . . .

Now to get even and

Humble proud heaven and

Now was the moment or

Never at all.

'Eva!' Each syllable

Light as a flower fell,

'Eva!' he whispered the

Wondering maid,

Soft as a bubble sung

Out of a linnet's lung

Soft and most silverly

'Eva!' he said.

Picture that orchard sprite,

Eve, with her body white,

Supple and smooth to her

Slim finger tips,

Wondering, listening,
Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half-way to her lips.

Oh had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came,
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass.

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low . . .
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him,
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain . . .
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill to-night—
'Eva!' the toast goes round,
'Eva!' again.

Ralph Hodgson

CLOCK-A-CLAY

In the cow-slip pips I lie,
Hidden from the buzzing fly,
While green grass beneath me lies,
Pearled with dew like fishes' eyes,
Here I lie, a clock-a-clay,
Waiting for the time of day.

While grassy forest quakes surprise,
And the wild wind sobs and sighs,
My gold home rocks as like to fall.
On its pillar green and tall;
When the pattering rain drives by
Clock-a-clay keeps warm and dry.

Day by day and night by night,
All the week I hide from sight;
In the cow-slip pips I lie,
In rain and dew still warm and dry;
Day and night, and night and day,
Red, black-spotted clock-a-clay.

My home shakes in wind and showers,
Pale green pillar topped with flowers,
Bending at the wild wind's breath,
Till I touch the grass beneath;
Here I live, lone clock-a-clay,
Watching for the time of day.

John Clare

WEATHERS

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
and nestlings fly:
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at "The Travellers' Rest,"
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west.
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Thomas Hardy

THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea:
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuice.

I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer:
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With 'Here is the fiddler of Dooney.'
And dance like a wave of the sea.

W. B. Yeats

CALICO PIE

I

Calico Pie,
The little Birds fly
Down to the calico tree,
Their wings were blue,
And they sang 'Tilly-loo!'
Till away they flew,—
And they never came back to me!
They never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back to me!

II

Calico Jam,
The little Fish swam.
Over the syllabub sea,
He took off his hat,
To the Sole and the Sprat,
And the Willeby-wat,—
But he never came back to me!
He never came back!
He never came back!
He never came back to me!

III

Calico Ban,
The little Mice ran,
To be ready in time for tea,
Flippity flup.
They drank it all up,
And danced in the cup,—

But they never came back to me!
They never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back to me!

IV

Calico Drum,
The Grasshoppers come,
The Butterfly, Beetle, and Bee,

Over the ground,
Around and round,
With a hop and a bound,—
But they never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back to me!

Edward Lear

LOVELIEST OF TREES

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.
And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

A. E. Housman

OFF THE GROUND

Three jolly Farmers
Once bet-a pound
Each dance the others would
Off the ground.
Out of their coats
They slipped right soon,
And neat and nicesome,
Put each his shoon.

One-Two-Three!—
And away they go,
Not too fast,
And not too slow;
Out from the elm-tree's
Noonday shadow,
Into the sun
And across the meadow.
Past the schoolroom,
With knees well bent
Fingers a-flicking,
They dancing went.
Up sides and over,
And round and round,
They crossed click-clacking.
The Parish bound.
By Tupman's meadow
They did their mile,
Tee-to-tum
On a three-barred stile.
Then straight through Whipham,
Downhill to Weck,
Footing it lightsome,

But not too quick,
Up field to Watchet,
And on through Wye,
Till seven fine churches
They'd seen skip by—
Seven fine churches,
And five old mills,
Farms in the valley,
And sheep on the hills;
Old Man's Acre
And Dead Man's Pool
All left behind,
As they danced through Wool.

And Wool gone by.
Like tops that seem
To spin in sleep
They danced in dream:
Withy—Wellover—
Wassop—Wo—
Like an old clock
Their heels did go.

A league and a league
And a league they went,
And not one weary,
And not one spent.
And lo, and behold!
Past Willow-cum-Leigh
Stretched with its waters
The great green sea.

Says Farmer Bates,
'I puffs and I blows,
Whats under the water,
Why, no man knows!'
Says Farmer Giles,
'My wind comes weak,
And a good man drowned
Is far to seek.'
But Farmer Turvey,
On twirling toes
Ups with his gaiters,
And in he goes:
Down where the mermaids
Pluck and play
On their twangling harps
In a sea-green day;
Down where the mermaids,
Finned and fair,
Sleek with their combs
Their yellow hair . . .

Bates and Giles—
On the shingle sat,
Gazing at Turvey's
Floating hat.

But never a ripple
Nor bubble told
Where he was supping
Off plates of gold.
Never an echo
Rilled through the sea
Of the feasting and dancing
And minstrelsy.
They called—called—called:
Came no reply:
Nought but the ripples'
Sandy sigh.
Then glum and silent
They sat instead,
Vacantly brooding
On home and bed,
Till both together
Stood up and said:—
'Us knows not, dreams not,
Where you be,
Turvey, unless
In the deep blue sea;
But excusing silver—
And it comes most willing—
Here's us two paying
Our forty shilling;
For it's sartin sure, Turvey,
Safe and sound,
You danced us square, Turvey:
Off the ground!'

Walter de la Mare

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