William Wordsworth, ‘Daffodils’

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.

Thomas Hardy, ‘The Darkling Thrush’

I leant upon a coppice gate

      When Frost was spectre-grey,

And Winter's dregs made desolate

      The weakening eye of day.

The tangled bine-stems scored the sky

      Like strings of broken lyres,

And all mankind that haunted nigh

      Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be

      The Century's corpse outleant,

His crypt the cloudy canopy,

      The wind his death-lament.

The ancient pulse of germ and birth

      Was shrunken hard and dry,

And every spirit upon earth

      Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among

      The bleak twigs overhead

In a full-hearted evensong

      Of joy illimited;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,

      In blast-beruffled plume,

Had chosen thus to fling his soul

      Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings

      Of such ecstatic sound

Was written on terrestrial things

      Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through

      His happy good-night air

Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew

      And I was unaware.

William Butler Yeats, ‘Down by the Salley Gardens’

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;

She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.

She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;

But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,

And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.

She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;

But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

William Butler Yeats, ‘The Second Coming’

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;

Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*

Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it

Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again; but now I know

That twenty centuries of stony sleep

Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?