Ode to the West Wind

I

O wild West Wind; thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, -
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariost to their dark wintry bed -
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow -
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill: -
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear! -

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean, -
Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aery surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head -
Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge -
Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might -
Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear! -

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams, -
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day, -
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers -
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know -
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear! -

IV
If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share -
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be -
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven -
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! -
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud. -

V
Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies -
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one! -
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth -
The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind! -
TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
    Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
    Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
    From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
    The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
    Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
    Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
    Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
    Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
    In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
    As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
        Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.
Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view!

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,-
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
And thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.
What object are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? What ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest-but ne’er knew love’s and satiety

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught:
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, a and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know.
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen them—as I am listening now.
THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning, my pilot, sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine aery nest,
As still as a brooding dove.
That orbed maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof;--
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.
APPENDIX II: P. B. SHELLEY’S BIOGRAPHY AND HIS WORKS

Shelley born in Sussex, 4th August 1792 and died on 8th July 1822

Education and early works

Son of an member of parliament, Shelley grew up in Sussex, and received his early education at home, tutored by Reverend Evan Edwards of Warnham. In 1802, he entered the Syon House Academy of Brentford. He was routinely bullied while he was there, both because of his "girlish" appearance and his family's aristocratic ties. Shelley had a poor temper and was particularly inept with his fists. As one of his classmates wrote, he was "like a girl in boy's clothes, fighting with open hands. In 1804, Shelley entered Eton College, where he fared little better, subjected to an almost daily mob torment his classmates called "Shelley-baits". Surrounded, the young Shelley would have his books torn from his hands and his clothes pulled at and torn until he cried out madly in his high-pitched "cracked soprano" of a voice. On 10th april 1810 he matriculation at university college, oxford. Legend has it that Shelley attended only one lecture while at Oxford, but frequently read sixteen hours a day. By all accounts he was unpopular with both students and dons, but managed to forge a close relationship with thomas jefferson hogg. His first publication was a Gothic novel, zastrozzi-1810 in which he gave vent to his atheism worldview through the villain Zastrozzi. In the same year, Shelley, together with his sister Elizabeth, published Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire. Whilst at Oxford, he issued a collection of verses (perhaps ostensibly burlesque but quite subversive), Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson, with Jefferson Davis Hogg..In 1811, Shelley published a pamphlet ‘the necessity of atheism. This gained the attention of the university administration and he was called to appear before the college's fellows. His refusal to repudiate the authorship of the pamphlet resulted in his being sent down (expelled) from Oxford on 25th march 1811, along with Hogg. The re-discovery in mid-2006 of Shelley's long-lost 'Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things', a long, strident anti-monarchical poem printed in Oxford, gives a new dimension to the expulsion, reinforcing Hogg's implication of political motives ('an affair of party'). Shelley was given the choice to be reinstated after his father intervened, on the condition that he would have had to recant his avowed views. His refusal to do so led to a falling out with his father.

Married life

Four months after being expelled, the 19-year-old Shelley travelled to scotland with the 16-year-old schoolgirl Harriet Westbrook to get married. After their marriage on august 28, 1811, Shelley invited his college friend Hogg to share their household, which included his wife. When Harriet objected, however, Shelley abandoned this first attempt at open marriage and brought her to keswick, cumbria in England's lake district, intending to write. Distracted by political
events, he visited Ireland shortly afterward in order to engage in radical pamphleteering. Here he wrote the ‘address to the Irish people and action’ and was seen at several nationalist rallies. His activities earned him the unfavourable attention of the British government. Unhappy in his nearly three-year-old marriage, Shelley often left his wife and child (Ianthe Shelley, 1813-76) alone while he visited William Godwin’s home and bookshop in London. It was here that he met and fell in love with Godwin's intelligent and well-educated daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, known to the world as Mary Shelley. Mary was the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Godwin was briefly married to her, and died a few days after giving birth to Mary in 1797. On July 28, 1814, Shelley abandoned his pregnant wife and child to elope with a 16-year-old for the second time. In fact, he managed to catch two 16-year-olds at this time: when he ran away with Mary, he also invited her step-sister Jane (later Claire) Clairmont along for company. The three sailed to Europe, crossed France, and settled in Switzerland, an account of which was subsequently published by the Shelleys. After six weeks, homesick and destitute, the three young people returned to England. There they found that William Godwin, the one-time champion and practitioner of ‘free love’, refused to speak to Mary or Shelley. In the autumn of 1815, while living close to London with Mary and avoiding creditors, Shelley produced the verse allegory *Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude*. It attracted little attention at the time, but it has now come to be recognized as his first major poem. At this point in his writing career, Shelley was deeply influenced by William Wordsworth poetry.

**Introduction to Byron**

In the summer of ‘1816 in poetry, Shelley and Mary made a second trip to Switzerland. They were prompted to do so by Mary's stepsister Claire Clairmont, who had commenced a liaison with Lord Byron the previous April just before his self-exile on the continent. Byron had lost interest in Claire, and she used the opportunity of meeting the Shelleys as bait to lure him to Geneva. The Shelleys and Byron rented neighbouring houses on the shores of Lake Geneva. Regular conversation with Byron had an invigorating effect on Shelley's poetry. While on a boating tour the two took together, Shelley was inspired to write his ‘hymn to intellectual beauty often considered his first significant production since *Alastor*. A tour of Chamonix in the French Alps inspired *Mont Blanc*, a difficult poem in which Shelley pondered questions of historical inevitability and the relationship between the human mind and external nature. Shelley, in turn, influenced Byron's poetry. This new influence showed itself in the third part of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, which Byron was working on, as well as in *Manfred*, which he wrote in the autumn of 1816. At the same time, Mary was inspired to begin writing *Frankenstein*, in part, by way of a competition between Byron, Shelley, Mary Shelley and Claire. The goal of the competition was to see who could write the best horror story. At the end of summer, the Shelleys and Claire returned to
England. Claire was pregnant with Byron's daughter, Allegra Byron, a fact that would have an enormous impact on Shelley's future.

**Personal tragedies and second marriage**

The return to England was marred with tragedy. Fanny Imlay, Mary Godwin's half-sister and a member of Godwin's household, killed herself in late autumn. In December 1816, Shelley's estranged wife Harriet drowned herself in the Serpentine in Hyde Park, London. On December 30, 1816, a few weeks after Harriet's body was recovered, Shelley and Mary Godwin were married. The marriage was intended, in part, to help secure Shelley's custody of his children by Harriet, but it was in vain: the children were handed over to foster parents by the courts. The Shelleys took up residence in the village of Marlow, Buckinghamshire where a friend of Percy's, Thomas Love Peacock, lived. Shelley took part in the literary circle that surrounded Leigh Hunt, and during this period, he met John Keats. Shelley's major production during this time was *Laon and Cythna*, a long, narrative poem in which he attacked religion and featured a pair of incestuous lovers. It was hastily withdrawn after only a few copies were published. It was later edited and reissued as *The Revolt of Islam* in 1818. Shelley also wrote two revolutionary political tracts under the *nom de plume* of "The Hermit of Marlowe."

**Drowning**

On July 8, 1822, less than a month before his 30th birthday, Shelley drowned in a sudden storm while sailing back from Livorno to Lerici in his schooner, *Don Juan*. Shelley claimed to have met his Doppelganger, foreboding his own death. He was returning from having set up *The Liberal* with the newly-arrived Hunt. The name "Don Juan", a compliment to Byron, was chosen by Edward Trelawny, a member of the Shelley-Byron Pisan circle. However, according to Mary Shelley's testimony, Shelley changed it to Ariel /Shakespeare. This annoyed Byron, who forced the painting of the words "Don Juan" on the mainsail. This offended the Shelleys, who felt that the boat was made to look much like a coal barge. The vessel, an open boat designed from a Royal Dockyards model, was custom-built in Genoa for Shelley. It did not capsize but sank; Mary Shelley declared in her "Note on Poems of 1822" (1839) that the design had a defect and that the boat was never seaworthy. Many believe his death was not accidental. Some say that Shelley was depressed in those days and that he wanted to die; others that he did not know how to navigate; others believe that some pirates mistook the boat for Byron's and attacked him, and others have even more fantastical stories. There is a mass of evidence, though scattered and contradictory, that Shelley may have been murdered for political reasons. Previously, at his cottage in 'Tann-yr-allt in Wales, he had been surprised and apparently attacked by a man who was probably an intelligence agent. Details of this incident can be found in Richard Holmes's biography, *Shelley: The Pursuit* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1975). In the days before he died, he was almost shot on two separate occasions. [citation needed]
British consul defended the shooter from the first of these two incidents, keeping him from all legal consequence. There is also evidence that they met an Italian Naval ship just before the storm that took their lives and refused assistance from the Navy. As for navigation, two other Englishmen were with him on the boat. [citation needed] One was a retired Navy officer and the other a boatboy, who should have known how to navigate to the nearby coast at Livorno. They drowned with Shelley, but an Italian boy who was also aboard did not drown. [citation needed] His identity, however, has remained a mystery. The boat was found beneath the waves near the shore, and it was plainly seen that one side of the boat had been rammed and staved in by a much stronger vessel. However, the liferaft was unused and still attached to the boat. Had it been an accident, they would at least have tried to swim for the beach. To do this, they most likely would have removed their clothing. However, the bodies were found completely clothed, including boots. In his 'Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron', Trelawny noted that the shirt that Williams's body was clad in was 'partly drawn over the head, as if the wearer had been in the act of taking it off [...] and [he was missing] one boot, indicating also that he had attempted to strip.' Trelawny also relates a supposed deathbed confession by an Italian fisherman who claimed to have rammed Shelley's boat in order to rob him, a plan confounded by the rapid sinking of the vessel. A large amount of cash and valuables was found untouched in the boat. The day following Shelley's death, the Tory newspaper "The Courier" gloated "Shelley, the writer of some infidel poetry, has been drowned, now he knows whether there is a God or no." (See Edmund Blunden, Shelley, A Life Story, London: Oxford University Press, 1965). Byron, however, was moved to say in a letter to the publisher John Murray: "You were all brutally mistaken about Shelley, who was without exception the best and least selfish man I ever knew. I never knew anyone who was not a beast in comparison." Shelley's body washed ashore, and later, in keeping with his unconventional views, was cremated on the beach near Viareggio. "The Funeral of Shelley" (also known as "The Cremation of Shelley"), by Louis Eduard Fournier, is an 1889 painting of the scene at Shelley's funeral pyre. Unfortunately, this painting is known to be inaccurate for several reasons. In pre-Victorian times, it was an English custom that women were not to attend funerals for reasons of health. Mary Shelley did not attend the funeral, but she was featured in this painting, kneeling at the left-hand side of the canvas. Also, Trelawney, in his account of the recovery of Shelley's body, records that "the face and hands, and parts of the body not protected by the dress, were fleshless", and by the time that the party returned to the beach for the cremation, the body was even further decomposed. In his graphic account of the cremation of Shelley's body, he writes of Lord Byron's being unable to face the scene, and withdrawing to the beach. Shelley's heart was snatched from the funeral pyre by Edward Trelawny; Mary Shelley kept it for the rest of her life. Shelley's ashes were interred in the Protestant Cemetery, Rome under a tower in the city walls with the inscription 'Cor Cordium' or 'heart of harmony'. The grave site is the second in the cemetery. Some weeks after Shelley was put to rest Trelawny came to Rome and did not like the position of his friend among a number of others and purchased what seemed to him to be a better plot near the old wall. The ashes
were exhumed and moved to their present location. Trelawny purchased the adjacent plot and over 60 years later his remains were placed there. A reclining statue of Shelley's body washed up on the shore, created by the sculptor, Edward Onslow Ford, can be found at University College, Oxford as the centrepiece of the Shelley Memorial there.

Advocacy of vegetarianism

Both Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley were strong advocates of vegetarianism. Shelley wrote several essays on the subject, the most prominent of which being "A Vindication of Natural Diet" and "On the Vegetable System of Diet". Shelley wrote: "If the use of animal food be, in consequence, subversive to the peace of human society, how unwarrantable is the injustice and the barbarity which is exercised toward these miserable victims. They are called into existence by human artifice that they may drag out a short and miserable existence of slavery and disease, that their bodies may be mutilated, their social feelings outraged. It were much better that a sentient being should never have existed, than that it should have existed only to endure unmitigated misery;" "Never again may blood of bird or beast/ Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,/ To the pure skies in accusation steaming;" and "It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion, and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust." Shelley was a strong advocate for social justice for the lower classes. He witnessed many of the same mistreatments occurring in the domestication and slaughtering of animals, and he became a fighter for the rights of all living creatures that he saw being treated unjustly. How he reconciled his views with his lack of responsibility for Harriet and his offspring, both inside and outside of marriage, is a matter of some debate.