

A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a water'd shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a daïs of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

NB: Vair is fur obtained from red squirrel, used in 13th & 14th centuries as a trimming.

Uphill

Does the road wind uphill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow, dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you waiting at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Is The Moon Tired?

*Is the moon tired? she looks so pale
Within her misty veil.
She scales the sky from east to west,
And takes no rest.*

*Before the coming of the night
The moon shows papery white;
Before the dawning of the day
She fades away.*

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Diamond or Coal

*A diamond or a coal?
A diamond, if you please:
Who cares about a clumsy coal
Beneath the summer trees?*

*A diamond or a coal?
A coal, sir, if you please:
One comes to care about the coal
What time the waters freeze.*

Christina Georgina Rossetti

What is Pink?

What is pink? a rose is pink
By the fountain's brink.
What is red? a poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.
What is white? a swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? why, an orange,
Just an orange!

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Hope

Hope is like a harebell trembling from its birth,
Love is like a rose the joy of all the earth;
Faith is like a lily lifted high and white,
Love is like a lovely rose the world's delight;
Harebells and sweet lilies show a thornless growth,
But the rose with all its thorns excels them both.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

If a Mouse

If a mouse could fly,
Or if a crow could swim,
Or if a sprat could walk and talk,
I'd like to be like him.

If a mouse could fly,
He might fly away;
Or if a crow could swim,
It might turn him grey;
Or if a sprat could walk and talk,
What would he find to say?

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Heartsease

Heartsease in my garden bed,
With sweetwilliam white and red,
Honeysuckle on my wall:—
Heartsease blossoms in my heart
When sweet William comes to call,
But it withers when we part,
And the honey-trumpets fall.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Caterpillar

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry,
Take your walk
To the shady leaf, or stalk,
Or what not,
Which may be the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing,
Ladybird nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper, so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat,
Nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Hopping Frog

Hopping Frog, hop here and be seen,
I'll not pelt you with stick or stone:
Your cap is laced and your coat is green;
Goodbye, we'll let each other alone.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

In the bleak mid-winter

*Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;*

*Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,*

*In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.*

*Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;*

*But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.*

*Our God, heaven cannot hold it
Nor earth sustain;*

*Heaven and earth shall flee away,
When He comes to reign:*

*In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.*

*What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part, -
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.*

Enough for him, whom cherubim

Worship night and day,

A breastful of milk

And a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him, whom angels

Fall down before,

The ox and ass and camel

Which adore.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

The Months

January cold desolate;
February all dripping wet;
March wind ranges;
April changes;
Birds sing in tune
 To flowers of May,
And sunny June
 Brings longest day;
In scorched July
The storm clouds fly
Lightning-torn
August bears corn.
September fruit;
In rough October
Earth must disrobe her;
Stars fall and shoot
In keen November;
And night is long
And cold is strong
In bleak December.

Christina Georgina Rossetti