

George Orwell - Collected Poems

A little poem

A happy vicar I might have been
Two hundred years ago
To preach upon eternal doom
And watch my walnuts grow;

But born, alas, in an evil time,
I missed that pleasant haven,
For the hair has grown on my upper lip
And the clergy are all clean-shaven.

And later still the times were good,
We were so easy to please,
We rocked our troubled thoughts to sleep
On the bosoms of the trees.

All ignorant we dared to own
The joys we now dissemble;
The greenfinch on the apple bough
Could make my enemies tremble.

But girl's bellies and apricots,
Roach in a shaded stream,
Horses, ducks in flight at dawn,
All these are a dream.

It is forbidden to dream again;
We maim our joys or hide them:
Horses are made of chromium steel
And little fat men shall ride them.

I am the worm who never turned,
The eunuch without a harem;
Between the priest and the commissar
I walk like Eugene Aram;

And the commissar is telling my fortune
While the radio plays,

But the priest has promised an Austin Seven,
For Duggie always pays.

I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls,
And woke to find it true;
I wasn't born for an age like this;
Was Smith? Was Jones? Were you?

1936

THE END

'Awake! Young Men of England'

Poem published in *The Henley and South Oxfordshire Standard*, 2 October 1914
(Age 11)
Fenwick H.001

Awake! Young Men of England

Oh! give me the strength of the Lion,
The wisdom of reynard the Fox
And then I'll hurl troops at the Germans
And give them the hardest of knocks.

Oh! think of the War Lord's mailed fist,
That is striking at England today:
And think of the lives that our soldiers
Are fearlessly throwing away.

Awake! Oh you young men of England,
For if, when your Country's in need,
You do not enlist by the thousand,
You truly are cowards indeed.

'Kitchener'

Poem published in *The Henley and South Oxfordshire Standard*, 21 July 1916
Fenwick H.002

Kitchener

No stone is set to mark his nation's loss,
No stately tomb enshrines his noble breast;
Not e'en the tribute of a wooden cross
Can mark this hero's rest.

He needs them not, his name untarnished stands,
Remindful of the mighty deeds he worked,
Footprints of one, upon time's changeful sands,
Who ne'er his duty shirked.

Who follows in his steps no danger shuns,
Nor stoops to conquer by a shameful deed,
An honest and unselfish race he runs,
From fear and malice freed.

'The Pagan'

Written autumn 1918 and sent to Jacintha Buddicom
Fenwick H.003

The Pagan

So here are you, and here am I,
Where we may thank our gods to be;
Above the earth, beneath the sky,
Naked souls alive and free.
The autumn wind goes rustling by
And stirs the stubble at our feet;
Out of the west it whispering blows,
Stops to caress and onward goes,
Bringing its earthy odours sweet.
See with what pride the the setting sun
Kinglike in gold and purple dies,
And like a robe of rainbow spun
Tinges the earth with shades divine.
That mystic light is in your eyes
And ever in your heart will shine.

'Our minds are married, but we are too young'

Given to Jacintha Buddicom, Christmas 1918
Fenwick H.007

Our minds are married, but we are too young

Our minds are married, but we are too young
For wedlock by the customs of this age
When parent homes pen each in separate cage
And only supper-earning songs are sung.

times past, when medieval woods were green,
Babes were betrothed, and that betrothal brief.
Remember Romeo in love and grief -
Those star-crossed lovers - Juliet was fourteen.

Times past, the caveman by his new-found fire
Rested beside his mate in woodsmoke's scent.
By our own fireside we shall rest content
Fifty years hence keep troth with hearts desire.

We shall remember, when our hair is white,
These clouded days revealed in radiant light

Collected By Abhi S.