

# 1. Joyce Kilmer

## To a young poet who killed himself

When you had played with life a space  
And made it drink and lust and sing,  
You flung it back into God's face  
And thought you did a noble thing.  
"Lo, I have lived and loved," you said,  
"And sung to fools too dull to hear me.  
Now for a cool and grassy bed  
With violets in blossom near me."

Well, rest is good for weary feet,  
Although they ran for no great prize;  
And violets are very sweet,  
Although their roots are in your eyes.  
But hark to what the earthworms say  
Who share with you your muddy haven:  
"The fight was on -- you ran away.  
You are a coward and a craven."

"The rug is ruined where you bled;  
It was a dirty way to die!  
To put a bullet through your head  
And make a silly woman cry!  
You could not vex the merry stars  
Nor make them heed you, dead or living.  
Not all your puny anger mars  
God's irresistible forgiving.

"Yes, God forgives and men forget,  
And you're forgiven and forgotten.  
You may be gaily sinning yet  
And quick and fresh instead of rotten.  
And when you think of love and fame  
And all that might have come to pass,  
Then don't you feel a little shame?  
And don't you think you were an ass?"

## 2. Joyce Kilmer

### The House With Nobody In It

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track  
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.  
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute  
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;  
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.  
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;  
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,  
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.  
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;  
But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid  
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.  
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be  
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,  
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.  
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone  
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

But a house that has done what a house should do,  
a house that has sheltered life,  
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,  
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling feet,  
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track  
I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,  
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen apart,  
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken heart.

### 3. Anne Charlotte Lynch Botta

#### Thoughts In A Library

Speak low - tread softly through these halls;  
Here genius lives enshrined, -  
Here reign, in silent majesty,  
The monarchs of the mind.

A mighty spirit-host they come,  
From every age and clime;  
Above the buried wrecks of years,  
They breast the tide of Time.

And in their presence-chamber here,  
They hold their regal state,  
And round them throng a noble train,  
The gifted and the great.

Oh, child of Earth! when round thy path  
The storms of life arise,  
And when thy brothers pass thee by,  
With stern, unloving eyes, -

Here shall the Poets chant for thee  
Their sweetest, loftiest lays;  
And Prophets wait to guide thy steps  
In wisdom's pleasant ways.

Come, with these God-anointed kings,  
Be thou companion here;  
And in thy mighty realm of mind,  
Thou shalt go forth a peer!

#### 4. Anne Charlotte Lynch Botta The Dying Sycamores

A beauty like young womanhood's  
Upon the green earth lies,  
And June's sweet smile hath waked again  
All summer's harmonies.

The insects hum their dreamy song,  
The trees their honors wear,  
And languid with its perfume spoils  
Sighs the voluptuous air.

A gorgeous wealth of leaf and bloom  
Enchants the dazzled sight;  
And over earth and sky there smiles  
A Presence of delight.

From yon sad dying Sycamores,  
Alone a shadow falls, -  
As from the ghastly form of Death,  
In Egypt's banquet-halls.

Against the soft blue sky they stand,  
Their naked limbs outspread,  
And to the throbbing life around,  
They murmur of the dead.

Spring, with her soft and odorous breath,  
Hath sighed o'er them in vain,  
Nor sun, nor dew, nor summer shower,  
Awakes their bloom again.

Oh stately monarchs of the wood,  
What blight hath o'er ye passed?  
What kanker wastes your noble hearts?  
What spell is on ye cast?

I watch ye where a thousand forms  
With life and beauty glow,  
Till half I deem that on ye lies  
Some weight of human woe.

Sad emblems are ye of those hearts  
In this fair world of ours,  
Who live unloving and unloved,  
Oh dying Sycamores.

